


SMITH'S

MAGAZINE

JUNE, 1916

15 CENTS



THE
SHINING
ADVENTURE
by
Dana Burnet
HELEN R. MARTIN'S
NEW SERIAL
TEN SHORT
STORIES

The POINT OF VIEW

¶ It makes all the difference in the world—the way we look at things. To one old lady the city may appear a den of iniquity to be shunned. To one girl it may be a perfect fairyland of restaurants, ballrooms, shops, and theaters. To another girl it may seem to hold the keys that will unlock for her the doors of her ambition.

¶ New points of view are always interesting. Joseph Ernest is one of the most original and entertaining of the writers of to-day. When you look at New York through his eyes, the view is positively refreshing. It seems so new and different. A young man falls in love with a waitress in a restaurant. He is ambitious, he prospers, and becomes associated with people of a much higher social standing. He thinks he falls in love with another girl—and this time the girl has wealth and high social position. On the whole, however, you had better read the story yourself when it appears in the next issue of SMITH'S. We can't tell it properly. But it is delightful to read how Susie, the waitress, blossomed forth as a fine lady, and how the young man finally learned wisdom. The story is called "West End Avenue," and you will feel like thanking us for telling you about it when you have read it.

¶ Are there any problems in your life? Are there times when you hesitate as to which of two courses to pursue? We intend to publish a series of problem stories—stories that really show the trying moments in the lives of American girls and women of to-day. The first will appear in the next issue of SMITH'S. It is called "The True Romance," and is written by Genevieve Scott.

¶ You want to read the second half of "The Shining Adventure," by Dana Burnet. You will find it in the next issue, as well as another big installment of Helen R. Martin's new serial. Then there are a lot of other good stories by such writers as Ralph Bergengren, Ruth Kauffman, Hildegard Lavender, Mary Brent Whiteside, Mary Patterson, and Winona Godfrey. It is the kind of magazine you will want to keep after you've read it through. It would be well for you to order your copy now.

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No. 3

A PUBLICATION FOR THE HOME

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SMITH'S MAGAZINE

Volume 23

JUNE, 1916

Number 3

The Shining Adventure

By Dana Burnet

ILLUSTRATED BY CLARENCE ROWE

The first installment of a wonderfully appealing two-part story. The romantic adventure of an imaginative, brave-spirited, little boy who sets out to buy Gramercy Park and become its king. Written with charm and delightful humor by a man who understands children.

CHAPTER I.

THE blue china pig would *not* come down of his own accord. That was a settled thing. He dwelt in peace and security upon the play-room shelf, a supercilious smile curving his lips, a stubborn kink in his blue china tail. Since the beginning of the world, or thereabouts, the pig had hovered at this perilous height—quite near the edge, yet never falling off.

The king stood before the mantelpiece, hands in pockets, reflecting upon the implacability of fate. Some five feet above the floor hovered an eminently breakable pig. Below stretched a square of hard, white tile, a veritable pave of destiny; but the pig—smug creature—would not come down. Secure in the knowledge of his intrinsic sacredness, he remained aloof, impudently smiling.

Now, to lay hands upon the pig, even in friendship, was sternly prohibited, for beneath his clever disguise as a plaything the pig was a penny bank. Into him, every Christmas and birthday, had gone solemn consignments of new pen-

nies, which were to be the king's fortune when he grew up. But growing up was an interminable process, and the king wanted his fortune immediately. He wanted his fortune for a purpose.

The purpose lay directly beneath the king's windows, and a most glorious green purpose it was! Within the borders of it, tall trees lifted their plumed shakos to the sun; dappled shadows lay upon the sweet new grass; flowers bloomed along the paths; a fountain tossed endless jewels into the air; birds sang in the lilac bushes; caterpillars crawled upon the leaves.

And the name of this purpose was—the park.

Now, there are many parks scattered across the world, but the king's park boasted a feature that set it quite apart from the others. This feature was an iron fence that marched about its edges with pointed spears, sternly repelling unlicensed invasion. Four gates opened in the fence, but the gates were relentless unless one happened to possess a key to them. Altogether, these gates separated the world into two distinct

classes—those who had keys and those who had not.

Those who had keys were perfectly satisfied with the arrangement, but those who had no keys were strangely restless about it. On warm summer days, the keyless ones would come fluttering to the fence like moths to a candle—ragged beggar men, with fever-haunted faces; old women, who stopped to smell the flowers and the soil; small children from the unmentionable avenues, who pressed white faces against the iron and cooled their eyes with the green. Often the king, playing in the park, had glanced up to see these other children staring at him with wistful eyes, and always it had troubled him. Once he had opened the gate for one of them—a little lame girl with a crutch—but Thelma, the governess, had shrieked and snatched him away from the small pariah; then had taken him home and washed him thoroughly with an evil-smelling soap. Despite this depressing experience, the king had continued to feel sorry for the other children.

One day it occurred to him that if he owned the park, he could do as he liked with it. He could admit whom he wished and exclude whom he would. This was a startling, a revolutionary, idea, which he soon elaborated into a course of action. As far as the king could observe, the park belonged to a very impressive policeman, who patrolled the sidewalks about the edges, and a very old and bent gardener, who patted down the flower beds and pulled the babies out of the fountain. Doubtless these two would part with their possessions fast enough, once the music of the king's fortune had been wafted to their ears. The only difficulty, then, was to secure the fortune.

It was obvious that the pig would not fall off the shelf from mere politeness. Pigs are notoriously lacking in the finer sensibilities. Would Fate, then, take a hand in the matter? The king

had waited almost a week, and Fate had not yet come to his assistance. There remained only the last resort of his going to the assistance of Fate.

With an air of determination not unmixed with regret, the king strode to the window and unhitched a noble Arab rocking-horse from its grazing rope—the curtain string. Dragging the faithful steed to a position facing the shelf, he leaped into the saddle and began to rock furiously. At each movement forward and back, a slight quiver shook the room from floor to ceiling. This quiver was communicated to the shelf, and from the shelf to the blue pig.

The Arab increased its pace. The room trembled. The blue pig began to dance upon the very edge of doom. Now one cloven hoof was poised over the brink. Still the false plaything danced on three legs. Faster sped the Arab. More briskly danced the pig. The king closed his eyes.

Crash!

The Arab came to an abrupt halt. Flinging himself from the saddle, the king stood a moment, listening for possible footsteps in the hall. Thelma, the governess, would ordinarily have investigated so thunderous a sound; but Thelma, as will shortly be explained, was occupied this morning with weightier matters.

Vivid as had been the king's imaginings of the blue pig's fall, the fact of it was even more glorious. A golden deluge covered the tile and overflowed upon the adjacent carpet. Bits of blue china, indeed, were discovered as far as the washstand. The pig's head, snapped off short behind the ears, continued to smile faintly from the ruin, but now his smile was one of pained surprise.

Carefully the king gathered up the telltale fragments. These he dropped into a wastebasket, covering them with odds and ends. Then, emptying a red

marble bag of its native contents, the king sat down to count his treasure.

Immediately he encountered new difficulties. He could count only up to ten. The most practiced banker, it must be admitted, would have been handicapped in such a circumstance. So the king, perceiving his mathematical shortcomings to be insurmountable, poured the pennies by handfuls into the marble bag. This proved, in the end, to be far more satisfactory than counting his wealth, for now he judged by the clink of it—as many another man of fortune has done. Probably, if he had computed it in actual figures, the treasure would have amounted to dollars disappointingly few. But judging by the clink, it ran well up into the thousands, being comparable, indeed, to the fortunes of the kings in fairy tales. It would buy the park, without the slightest doubt, and leave something over for sweets, besides.

Going to the window, the king looked down upon the green country with a thrill of proprietorship. Mist lay upon all the park, for it was early morning, and the crowding city walls were blotted and smoothed away. Towers of silver lifted fairy minarets to the round red sun. The air was like a windowpane that one has breathed upon and afterward traced with all manner of whimsical architecture. Under the guise of the mist, the little green country took on the semblance of a land from Grimm.

He had been without a kingdom until this day—if you except the vague territory of dreams that lies in the shadows back of bedtime—and now at last he was to come into his rightful inheritance. He would own all the land inside the iron fence, and have sovereign power over the four gates, so that none might enter without his royal sanction; and he would possess by divine right the fairy castles of the mist that stood so faintly against the sky before the sun had topped the roofs. It was the

gardener who built these castles, busy himself as he would with his sly pretense of the flower beds. There was magic in his gnarled, earth-stained old hands, and never a doubt of it. No man as twisted as he ever lived outside a fairy tale. Moreover, the babies trusted him implicitly, and proved it by not falling into the fountain except when he was near. These babies, decided the king, would be permitted to remain in the park upon condition that they did not grow up to be more than eight, for that was the king's own age, and it would be lese majesty to outgrow the king.

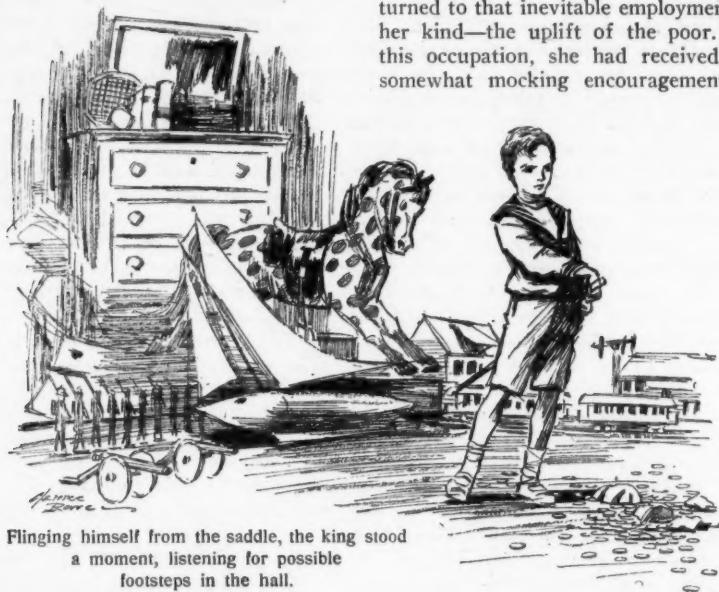
I have said that the king was eight. To be strictly truthful, he was eight-going-on-nine, which is something in the way of a departure, as kings go. Ordinary kings are bearded gentlemen who dwell in illustrated gazettes and have one large plumed hat in common, which they hold gracefully lifted above their slightly bald heads.

My king, however, was not of the ordinary. To begin with, he was a charity child, and his immediate ancestry was not above reproach. His father had been a socialist, poor, disreputable gentleman! His mother had been a lady, but her early death had left the king quite at the mercy of socialism, which, to Aunt Philomena's mind, was something vaguely connected with soiled linen and bombs in the cathedral. Aunt Philomena, indeed, had deferred legal adoption of the king because of his regrettable socialistic forbear. If the king turned out a gentleman, all well and good; but if he turned out a socialist!

She had done her best to make the king a little gentleman, and he had fought the process, step by step, with all the strength that was in him. He had fought manners, which consisted chiefly of starched collars on Sunday and saying "sir" to the rector. He had fought Thelma, the governess, with her

English accent and her tyrannical insistence upon soap behind the ears. He had begged to be allowed to attend a public school. When this request had been denied, he had turned stubborn, refusing point-blank to harass his mind with the principal products of Uruguay and "What is a delta?" So Miss Philomena had substituted a course of physical culture, instead—dumb-bells, exer-

to make her ancient Knickerbocker name almost unnecessary; and because the world in which she found herself was raucously and insistently democratic, the good lady suffered not a little. She had reached the unmentionable side of thirty in virginal safety, and, being without immediate family, had found herself in a state of mental and spiritual idleness that was well-nigh unbearable. Consequently, she had turned to that inevitable employment of her kind—the uplift of the poor. In this occupation, she had received the somewhat mocking encouragement of



Flinging himself from the saddle, the king stood a moment, listening for possible footsteps in the hall.

cising pulleys, and punching bag. Whereupon, the king, viewing these innovations with delight, had promptly announced his intention of becoming a prize fighter. Inwardly, Miss Philomena trembled to her soul, but she did not dare remove the beloved paraphernalia. Already she had begun to avoid conflicts with the king's temper.

Miss Philomena van Zandt, the queen regent, was a beautiful woman grown cold with worship of respectability. She was pure patrician, with wealth enough

Doctor Peter MacLean, a grim-faced surgeon of national reputation, who had been mildly in love with Miss Philomena for the past ten years. Let it be said in the doctor's favor that Miss Philomena would have married him long ago if she had been quite sure that he was not a pagan.

He was one of the authorities in the country upon social evils and their remedies, and he was rude enough to laugh uproariously when Miss Philomena toured the East Side in her elec-

tric brougham—with a liveried chauffeur and footman—to distribute pocket Bibles to the poor.

This rudeness upon the doctor's part, however, served only to stiffen Miss Philomena's resolution. She would uplift the masses now, whether or no! In this spirit of determined benevolence, she joined charity after charity, paid initiation fee after initiation fee, accepted office after office. Once started, she could not resist the temptation of joining just one more. By means of her innumerable connections, her countless memberships, she managed to bring together the most important societies throughout the East and to form them into a single large body, known as the United Charities. Miss Philomena was elected president of this new body, and, as such, presided at the annual conference, an event with which our story is directly concerned.

The king was one of Miss Philomena's lesser charities. She had taken him, in a weak moment, from a bleak charity parlor, washed him from head to foot, and placed him in a window to be the king. This enterprise the doctor had warmly commended. But she had forgotten to provide him with a kingdom, which was a grave omission for a queen regent, so he was forced to make his plans alone, aided only by an old fairy story or two.

The playroom, as the king turned from the window, seemed suddenly to have shrunk in size. He had outgrown it for good and all. Yet its familiar objects tugged mightily at his heart. From every nook and corner—it is in the corners that the heartaches lie—some well-loved treasure sent forth a dumb appeal. A Lattalion of Christmas soldiers presented arms along the wall, begging him not to forget their glorious past record. The noble Arab eyed him with a gentle reproach. A glittering tin sword swung from the bedpost—for security against burglars

in the night—mute reminder of battles lost and won. The sad part about empire building is that you have to leave so much behind.

It came down at last to blade and specie, the bones of every expeditionary venture. Buckling the tin sword about his waist, and thrusting the richly jingling marble bag into his trousers pocket, the king walked again to the window, intentionally avoiding the eyes of the Christmas soldiers. Behind him, the whole world of his things whispered and pleaded in the silent heart language of the playroom. Well they knew that he intended to run away.

But below the window, tall trees nodded in the wind, birds sang in the lilac bushes, and the sun, brushing aside the cobwebs of the mist, flung great splashes of golden light across the grass. And there, at the turn of the fence, one of the other children clung with futile hands, staring wistfully in at the forbidden kingdom.

To-morrow all that would be changed. The gates would be flung wide. The other children, an uncountable, ragged host of them, would come pouring in to dance upon the grass, to play along the walks, to cool their parched lips at the waters of the fountain.

To-morrow!

CHAPTER II.

Miss Philomena van Zandt, of Gramercy Park North, sat reading a telegram in her staid ancestral library. There was a well-bred frown furrowing the lady's smooth brow, a delicate shadow of perplexity clouding her beautiful, if somewhat coldly aristocratic, countenance. Through the refining medium of a gold lorgnette, she peered at the blatant yellow slip, which had arrived, with characteristic ruthlessness, at seven o'clock of the morning:

Find myself unexpectedly at liberty to attend conference will arrive nine-thirty Grand Central.

BISHOP TRIPPIE.

Now, the Right Reverend Doctor Trippit was a very important bishop, who had received quite an amazing amount of publicity because of his revolutionary ideas about cities. He believed, and proclaimed in no uncertain tones from the pulpit, that cities were entirely too crowded. He exhorted the populations of large cities to move out into the adjacent country, and figuratively hurled himself at the head of the procession. If an X-ray photograph could have been taken of the bishop's mind during one of these sermons on exodus, no doubt it would have proved a facsimile of Moses leading the children of Israel out of Egypt. Secretly, the bishop considered himself a modern Moses. Miss Philomena shared the bishop's idea of his own importance, and she realized that it would be nothing short of a triumph to secure him for the conference. But this descent upon her at the eleventh hour presented difficulties.

The annual conference of United Charities was held every June in the president's staid brownstone house in Gramercy Park North. Thither, like pilgrims traveling to Mecca, flocked the representatives of the various charities throughout the East. Several of the most socially acceptable of these pilgrims it was Miss Philomena's custom to entertain beneath her own roof. To this end, for days before the event, she juggled beds and marshaled spare rooms, isolated a fussy *grande dame* here, or doubled a pair of callous gentlemen social workers there. But one cannot double a bishop with impunity, especially a corpulent bishop.

Drawing a sheet of paper from her mahogany writing desk, Miss Philomena wrote as follows:

Guest Room—Reverend John Ramie, Boston.

White Room—Mr. Lawrence Love, Philadelphia; Mr. Will Winberry, Providence.

Spare Room—Mrs. T. Herbert Horn, Brooklyn; Miss E. Jones, Cleveland.

"And that," murmured Miss Philomena, "leaves the bishop and me."

She blushed involuntarily, and glanced at the small French clock on her desk. It was half past eight. Suddenly she gave a little start and a sigh, as one who stumbles upon the answer to a riddle. Then she put down, with a flourish:

My Room—Bishop Trippit.

The Boy's Room—Self.

"There!" exclaimed Miss Philomena.

She rose, and pulled a bell cord of ancient lineage. A no less ancient manservant answered the ring.

"Please telephone for the brougham, Simms."

"Very good, ma'am."

"Have my things moved into the playroom, and send Thelma to me at once."

"Very good, ma'am."

When the ancient Simms had departed, Miss Philomena permitted herself the luxury of a self-congratulatory smile. She had solved the delicate dilemma of the unexpected bishop quite happily, with benefit to all concerned. She had decided to send Thelma and the boy to the Holland House for a day or two—until the conference had run its course. That solved the bishop, gave her an extra bedroom, and—not the least important result—effectually disposed of a lesser charity which, upon occasion, was disturbingly imbued with a temper.

The queen regent had done her best by the king in the strict matter of duty, but she had made that one fatal mistake of not providing him with a kingdom. Of course, the playroom did well enough in its way, but it was only four walls and a window at best; and one cannot be long content with that if one has ever trod the open country of the dreams. So she had forgotten that he was a king, and, because of that forgetting, she had been barred from all the glorious Land of Pretending—which, I

think, is the saddest thing that can happen to any woman who plays at being a mother.

Five years before, at the time when Miss Philomena's charitable impulse had been sweeping her forward in an irresistible tide of philanthropic fever, a strike had occurred in a mill town in New Jersey. Feeling had run high, and the militia had been called out. Among the leaders of the strike had been a young socialist of unimportant name, who had traveled to the afflicted region simply because he had believed that there was a principle involved. He had been one of those ridiculous persons who believe in principles.

There had come a day when the tension had snapped. The strikers, urged on by their women, had gone forward in a snarling battalion to meet the khaki-clad line of vested authority. The story was that the young socialist ran out in front of his people to prevent their firing, only to encounter destiny in the shape of a bullet from the rifle of a kneeling boy militiaman who had grown nervous with gazing at the black faces before him.

Thus it had fallen out that the young socialist's only son and heir, aged three, had arrived in New York with a tag around his neck, and had sat with other starvelings of the strike in an eleemosynary parlor. There, Miss Philomena, coming to distribute Bibles to the orphans, had found him, his chubby fist in his mouth; and, the uplift being strong upon her, she had taken him home and mothered him desperately for a while.

In those early days, the queen regent had been wont to stand in the door and look with a certain wistfulness upon the pageants of the king's invention. Occasionally she had graciously become a part of the playroom affairs, and made herself into hostile castles, attacking ogres, and military objectives, at will. But later, when the child had

outgrown his first charm, and had become a complex little body with flashing blue eyes and a tendency toward temper, Miss Philomena had turned him over to an English governess and gone back to the deserving poor. It is always so much easier to uplift the world beyond one's own gates.

So the woman who had played at being a mother went her way with an armful of Bibles. But the king, having inherited from his disreputable dead father the divine prerogative of dreams, gathered up his sword and his treasure and fared forth to seek those kingdoms which wait for every child upon the unknown highways of to-morrow.

CHAPTER III.

The history of empire is a chronicle of tremendous trifles. The episode of Thelma, the governess, is no more than an incident in our story, but upon it hangs the very life of the king's adventure.

On this morning, as has been hinted, Thelma was concerned with matters more weighty than the investigation of that mysterious crash in the playroom. Her room being almost directly across the hall, she could not help but hear the detonations of the blue pig's decline and fall, but her mind had refused to accept what her ears recorded. Her mind was entirely occupied with 'Enry.

'Enry was a taxicab man, not Thelma's equal in education or pronunciation, perhaps, but a strong, handsome, masterful fellow, for all that. Thelma was engaged to marry 'Enry. Furthermore, she was engaged to elope with him.

In explanation of this circumstance, let us consider the fact that 'Enry was a socialist; not the sort of a socialist who believes in principles, mind you—'Enry believed in the abrogation of principles, especially in the case of other people's property. 'Enry felt an enor-

mous, an overweening, contempt for other people's property. He believed in equal distribution.

That is why, at the bottom of Thelma's already neatly packed hand bag, there reposed a select consignment of Miss Philomena's best table linen, several pieces of flat silver, a real-lace centerpiece, and a small diamond pin. This was no bald larceny. If you grasp 'Enry's point of view, the diamond pin, for instance, was only a generous wedding present from Miss Philomena to the bride.

Yet 'Enry had insisted upon elopement. Persons who have not been consulted about the distribution of their property are prone to overlook the socialistic point of view. They are prone to telephone for the police; and the police are notoriously impervious to reason.

Hence, Thelma, her bag packed, her hat laid out upon the bed, sat near the window this June morning, awaiting the arrival of 'Enry's taxicab at the corner, half a block away.

Suddenly footsteps sounded in the hall. There came a knock at her door, and then the wooden voice of Simms:

"You're wanted, miss. In the library, miss."

"Very well, Simms."

A short time later, having concealed her telltale bag beneath the bed, Thelma descended the stairs to the library. Miss Philomena, dressed for the street, stood buttoning a pair of long white gloves near the window. Through the parted curtains the governess could see the maroon-colored electric brougham standing at the curb, with Barker, the stout driver, and Greene, the slim footman, seated, in liveried splendor, upon the box. Her heart leaped within her.

"Thelma," said Miss Philomena, "I'm sending you and the boy to the Holland House for a day or two. You may telephone for rooms, if you like. I'm going to the station to meet a—guest. I

should prefer that you leave before I return."

Then Thelma, with the image of 'Enry in her soul, almost laughed aloud.

"I will leave before you return," said Thelma.

It was very still on the stairs. By that I mean both the front and the back stairs, though, if the truth were known, the back stairs had a trifle the better of it in the matter of quiet.

Down the back stairs stole Thelma, the governess, hat in one hand, bag in the other, like a villainess in a play.

"If I can only escape the boy!" exclaimed Thelma, beneath her breath.

Very cautiously down the front stairs crept the king, the tin sword at his side, the marble bag stuffed into his pocket. At every step the pennies jingled musically, clutch them as he would. Because of the pennies, the front stairs were at some disadvantage in the contest of silence.

From his window, the king had seen Miss Philomena drive away in the brougham, the familiar figures of Barker and Greene perched aloft, and he knew there was no danger from that quarter.

"If only Thelma doesn't hear me!" thought the king, taking a fresh grasp on his money bag. And so, as in many another respectable house, the front stairs did not know what the back stairs were doing.

With a muttered prayer to whatever socialistic deity she worshiped, Thelma, the governess, reached the bottom step and made ready for a dash through the butler's pantry. There, as luck would have it, she bumped fairly into Simms. Uttering a mouselike squeak, she brushed past him, flung herself against the back door, and so fled out into the June morning—and out of our story.

At last the king found himself in the lower hall, facing the solemn crisis of the front door. Over this portal

gleamed a wide strip of stained glass, through which the summer sunshine poured in floods of rainbow-colored light. It was the glory of his kingdom shining from afar.

With throbbing pulses, he put out his hand and took the key to the park from its place beside the door. It was a small key, indeed, to be causing such a difference in the world. Hitherto, it had possessed something of the sacredness of the blue pig, but tradition, once defied, is soon shattered.

Thrusting the key into his pocket, the king laid bold hand upon the doorknob. A twist and a tug, and he was out, out in a universe of hurrying people, busy streets, unceasing sounds. But yonder the park lay, cool and green, under the guard of its marching iron pickets; and there, standing impressively near the gate, was the huge policeman, his buttons winking gloriously in the sun.

CHAPTER IV.

The back of a policeman is the most terrifying thing in the world. I state this fact boldly, having made an exhaustive study of policemen, front and back. My conclusions are that the front of a policeman may include a very jovial, round face and a bit of neighborly gossip; but the back is Judgment Day done in dark blue.

Thoughts similar to these flashed through the king's mind as he stood gazing up at the broad back of the park policeman. In the name of all adventure, how did one attract the attention of such a magnificent, huge mass of blue without bringing the whole weight of the law down on one? What would happen if one pulled his coat tails? Immediate arrest and conviction, no doubt. Fancy pulling a policeman's coat tails!

"S-say!"

Not a response. Not a movement. Not a quiver of the blue mass.

The king determined upon a strate-

gic flank movement. Grasping the tin sword, for greater assurance, he marched around the vast blue column of the policeman's leg until he found himself looking up into a pair of eyes as bright and twinkling as their owner's buttons.

"Hello!" said the king, blurting it all out at once. "Is this your park?"

The park policeman, bending down until the front of him was all wrinkles, looked solemnly into his small questioner's face.

"Of course 'tis mine! An' would ye be wantin' to borrey it of me the day?"

"I want to buy it from you," said the king, and jingled his pennies with a sly hand.

The policeman straightened up again, so that now the front of him was a vast, billowing ocean of blue.

"Buy it from me! Sure, what would ye be doin' with such an extensive bit of property?"

"I want it to play in," said the king.

The policeman removed his cap—a tremendously impressive ceremony—and scratched his head with a crooked forefinger.

"I have the park for borreyin' purposes only," said the policeman. "If ye want to buy outright, ye'll have to speak to the gardener yonder. An' don't let him overcharge ye for it. 'Tis only imitation country, at best."

"I won't," replied the king, and would have added, "Thank you," but for the fact that it was manners. So he put out his hand instead.

The policeman shook it heartily.

"Lad," said he, "I disremember how long it has been since I wanted a whole park to play in, but anyways I wish ye the best of luck."

The king, this fair benediction in his ears, went on to the gate, and, drawing the brass key from his pocket, managed, after some fumbling, to get it fairly into the lock. The gate opened easily.

The gardener was working in a clump

of green bushes at the far end of the park. His head, as he bent to pull a weed, was within a few inches of the ground. As the king approached, the gardener suddenly thrust his head forward, somewhat in the manner of a turtle, showing a face as wrinkled as a shriveled leaf. The eyes in this face were a faded blue, and the light in them was very vague and flickering. You understood at a glance that the gardener was only a child excessively burdened with years.

"Gardener," said the king, in the familiar tones of old acquaintanceship, "I want to buy the park."

"Do ye, now?" chuckled the other, straightening his strangely bent torso by a series of jerks. "Do ye, now, Master Moneybags? And what'll ye give me for it, since I've got it to growin' so green?"

The king drew out the marble bag and shook it cunningly.

"I guess there's maybe a thousand dollars in this bag," he whispered, peering up into the old man's face.

The gardener put his gnarled hand into the throat of the king's purse. His thin brown fingers twisted this way and that among the jingling pieces; then the hand was withdrawn, clutching a small fortune in pennies.

"There, now!" said the gardener, blinking at the wealth in his palm. "Aren't they bright uns, though?"

"They've never been used, or anything," said the king.

The gardener gave his body another sharp jerk upward. It was his habit thus to raise and lower himself by degrees.

"Well, now," said he, putting on a look that was intended to be as wise as an owl's, "let's get to our bargainin'. How many pennies to buy a park? Ye might make a song of it——"

"I'll give you all you've got in your hand," said the king.

"Ye might make a song of it," mut-

tered the gardener, staring with his old, old eyes at the king.

The latter waited patiently. He realized that the gardener was having one of his queer spells, and would be over it directly.

"Yes," whispered the aged man, stirring the bright pieces in his hand, "there's singin' there, if ye've got the ear for it." He cupped his hands together, and, holding the pennies to his ear, shook them gently. "Ye could dance to that. Ye could dance and be happy. That's better than buyin' sillies with it."

Smiling feebly, he poured the pennies back into the bag.

"Won't you sell me the park?" cried the king, in dismay.

"What do ye want of it?" queried the gardener.

So the king, feeling that the gardener would understand, explained just what he wanted of it. He told about wanting the park for a kingdom, and how he intended to found an empire there; and then he told about the other children, who laid their cheeks against the iron and looked so wistfully at the green. The gardener nodded at this.

"I've seen 'em," he quavered, "hangin' to the fence like brown moths. Not allowed. No, sir! That's the word for them. Not allowed, poor rats!"

"I'll let them in," said the king.

"Well, now," said the gardener, his eyes brightening suddenly, "there's a fine thing! Maybe ye would—I dunno."

"Now will you sell me the park?"

The gardener did not seem to hear.

"Not allowed," he mumbled. "Poor rats!"

"How much will you sell it for?"

"For a song," said the gardener suddenly, and then fell to laughing at his own wit, and from laughing went to coughing, and from coughing to hard breathing, and from hard breathing to easy breathing, and so back to his natural pipe again.

"We must have it accordin' to the law," said the gardener. "Ye must pay me a penny down, to bind the bargain, or the title won't pass. Ye have to be clever about your titles in *this* world, I tell ye!"

The king paid his penny down, and the gardener, doubling himself by swift jerks, scooped a handful of loose earth from one of the flower beds, after which he snapped a blossoming twig from a bush near by. Then the gardener bade the king hold out his hands and dropped the twig into them, pouring the loose earth over it and reciting, in a childish singsong:

"By this bond I give to thee
Brown earth and growin' tree!"

And so the king was made master of the green country at a price that dimly approximated a song, and the gardener, immeasurably delighted over the small ceremony, pocketed his penny, with a prodigious wink at the sky.

"I'm going to find the other children now," said the king. "But I'll come back to-morrow."

"That's a long time off," said the gardener. There, now, I must get on at the weeds. Don't forget you're to let them in. Poor rats!"



"Thelma," said Miss Philomena, "I'm sending you and the boy to the Holland House for a day or two. I'm going to the station to meet a—guest."

"I won't forget," answered the king, as he turned back along the path to the gate.

CHAPTER V.

The country of the other children lay east of the park, a thousand leagues by one reckoning, a few short blocks by another. Eastward, then, our tale of empire takes its way, for it was in this direction that the king traveled in search of a prospective citizenry.

He crossed the first of the unmentionable avenues, heard the thunder of the elevated trains roaring awfully overhead, saw the wilted shops below. There was a shadow on this highway and a curse of noise. Yet houses stood with even front along its either edge, and in these houses humans lived, with their heads thrust out of windows.

The street went on, twisted, wavered, and then took a turn for the worse. The last bit of green had vanished, the last defiant geranium had gone from sooty window sill. Slovenly buildings, flecked with hopeless windows, stood beneath the brazen sky, their faces scarred by a species of fire escape that zigzagged down the brick like tired lightning. All of these buildings were hung with innumerable varicolored garments, frankly personal and intimate, which, at a distance, gave them a grotesque air of being in gala attire.

Here the summer day was filled with a continuous chatter, like the loud humming of bees. An army of children ran, danced, fought, played, laughed, sobbed, shouted, fell down, got up, threw balls, rolled hoops, walked along railings, courted death, clung to life, were spanked, fed, washed, admonished, called in, called out, sent on errands, told to leave off, go on, take the baby, relinquish the baby—All this at once, you understand.

Suddenly the king turned a corner and found himself in a little pocket of a street that seemed noisier, dirtier, and more filled with children than all the other streets put together. On the corner—admirable gateway to squalor—stood a dilapidated saloon, with a blotched sign dragging from its wall. The sign read:

O'CONNOR'S ALLEY.

A little girl, with a wooden crutch under her arm, came slowly around the corner, hobbling directly toward the king. Her eyes, rather tragic eyes,

roved restlessly from side to side, as if in search of some healing beauty which they could never find. Her face was a fragile whiteness, like the face of a flower that has been long athirst. Suddenly her fluttering glance fell upon the king. She stopped short, her crutch squeaking along the pavement, and stared at him. Then speech came to her, in the form of a peculiar question; one, indeed, that did not seem to bear upon the present situation at all:

"What'd they do to you for lettin' me in?"

And then the king knew her. It was the small pariah for whom he had once opened the park gate. He stood gazing at her in unconcealed joy and delight. In this strange land, she seemed the oldest and dearest of friends.

"They washed me," said the king.

"Is that all?"

"With soap."

"They chased me," said the little lame girl, as if it were her usual fortune to be chased.

The king came a pace nearer and said, in a confidential whisper:

"Want to know something?"

"Yes."

"They couldn't chase you now, because I've bought the park. It's mine! The gardener said so. I've got the key and everything."

To verify his claims, the king drew forth the brass key to the park and dangled it before his old and dear friend's eyes.

"Oh!" said the little lame girl. "Oh, oh!" She drew a great, shaky breath. "Couldn't they—really—chase me?"

"Of course not," said the king. "What's your name?"

"Maggie," said the lady.

"You can come and play in the park, if you like."

"Oh, oh, oh!" cried little Maggie, for sheer happiness.

At this moment, unfortunately, a small imp with sizzling red hair, clad

chiefly in a gunny sack, shot precipitately about the corner, with shrieks of joyous abandon. Coming suddenly upon the sight of the king and his first citizen, the former with hand on hilt, the latter with adoration in her eyes, the imp halted abruptly, stared, put his fingers into his mouth, and loosed a noise that for tone and carrying power reduced his former shrieks to a mere whisper.

Immediately, as if the whistle constituted a prearranged signal, there came a quick patter of feet from the recesses of O'Connor's Alley. The clans of childhood hold themselves instinctively prepared to answer all alarms.

"Hey, fellers!" shrieked the imp, dancing about with utter disregard of his precarious raiment. "Looky who's flirtin' with Lamey O'Connor! Tin soldier!"

"Ya-a! Tin soldier! Ya-a—Lamey!"

A score of throats took up the decisive cry. The king found himself quickly surrounded by a horde of small ragamuffins, from whose open mouths fell an angry buzzing not unlike the choleric symphony of a disturbed hornets' nest. Instinctively he retreated until he felt the brick wall of the shabby saloon at his shoulders. There, perforce, he stood, facing the little wolves who howled about him.

The little lame girl had been swept aside by the first onrush. The king caught a last glimpse of her being rudely jostled by the throng, and his temper leaped up in him like a flame. He drew the tin sword from its scabbard with shaking hands.

"If you touch her, I'll kill you!"

A hush fell upon the little wolves—the hush of a mob that finds itself confronted by a finer frenzy than its own.

Then, at the extreme rear of the press, where the round-eyed babies peered from the arms of small, peeping mothers, a ripple began, a move-

ment as of some authoritative person thrusting through a mob. A lane opened magically, and at the far end of this lane the king saw striding toward him a boy of about his own size and age, a boy with a freckled face and a stub nose, who bore himself with the dignity of a public character. In his wake, copying his every gesture, strutted the imp of the gunny sack.

O'Connor's Alley burst into a cheer: "Ya-a, Mickey!"

The advancing Mickey looked neither to the right nor to the left. He was the acknowledged leader of the alley, both in peace and war. His valor and cunning were the boast of his fellows. In mischief most prolific, in battle most invincible, he ruled the alley with an iron hand. Majestically he strode down the lane, disdainful of the alley's cheers, and, as he came, he rolled a tattered sleeve suggestively back from a scrawny arm. Behind him, the imp danced in an ecstasy of joy.

"Hit 'im in t' eye, Mickey!" shrieked the imp, brandishing an infinitesimal fist.

The great Mickey turned with dignity.

"Beat it, youse!" he said crushingly. "This ain't no place for kids!"

Temporarily the imp subsided. Mickey continued down the lane until he stood face to face with the king. There he paused, spat impressively, and rolled up the other sleeve.

"Start somethin'," suggested Mickey the invincible.

The king did not reply. He was thinking of his early ambitions to be a prize fighter. Often, in his gladiatorial imaginings, he had faced the champions of fisticuffs, posed as this boy was posed now. He had always vanquished them quite easily.

The angry buzzing of the crowd had begun again. But against his shoulders the king felt the hard wall, and he was not afraid.

"Ya-a!" sneered Mickey. "Tin soldier! What you doin' in O'Connor's Alley?"

This question, of all the questions that Mickey might have asked, was the very hardest to answer offhand. The more altruistic one's motives are, the more difficult of explanation they become.

"I am—I've come to be—the king!"

A shout of infinite derision burst from the throng, but Mickey lifted a compelling hand. Then, in the throbbing silence, the great man turned to the intruder upon his domain, the pretender who had threatened his throne.

"Does your mother know you're out?" he queried, with withering contempt.

"Does yours?" asked the king unexpectedly.

Mickey hastily invented new insults.

"I seen you over on the avenoo," he improvised smoothly, "playin' with paper dolls!"

"You're a liar!" said the king.

Mickey gulped and drew back. Then he flung himself into the posture of his favorite hero in the sporting pages. His pipestem arms worked spasmodically. He scowled the scowl that had struck terror into the hearts of his adversaries heretofore.

Behind him, the imp shrieked encouragement.

"Soak 'im, Mickey!" cried the imp.

Mickey soaked him.

There was a sudden clatter as the tin sword dropped to the pavement; then Mickey and the pretender became a flying whirlwind of arms, legs, and hair.

CHAPTER VI.

In the rear room of the dilapidated saloon, a huge man, in a threadbare frock coat, sat at a table, gloomily sipping beer. The coat had grown polished by long contact with the world

It belonged to a former age and should have been retired with honor years ago; but, having graced its owner's person in the days of his glory—he had been an alderman, no less—it now clung to him as the falling mantle of twilight clings to the shoulders of the descending sun. As if to lighten this somberness of the dead past with some symbol of the brighter present, the huge gentleman wore upon the back of his head a straw hat of almost jaunty pattern. His throat was clasped by a collar of the type known as standing. This particular collar had stood a long time. Its corners, bent down by a strong, but not overcleanly, hand, gave grateful outlet to the harassed chin, which poured forth, in numberless billows, over a pale-green ocean of Ascot scarf.

The large gentleman's brow, while not of prepossessing height, was swept by an impressive lock of sandy hair—the hall mark of the practiced Democrat. A pair of small blue eyes, melancholy by cultivation rather than by nature, peered out beneath gently frowning brows. The face was too full and round to carry the expression of noble sadness habitually imposed upon it. One of the gentleman's ears was peculiarly damaged. Early in his career, even before he had become a statesman, he had been a prize fighter, and heavyweight champion of the district.

Opposite this extraordinary personage sat a man in a pink shirt, the sleeves of which were held up by elastics of a pale yellow. A derby hat, green with age, was tipped over the wearer's right ear at an angle hitherto unknown to science. The derby hat, if not the yellow elastics, proclaimed this man to be a person of some importance about the saloon. He was, in fact, the proprietor of it—Mr. Daniel Fogarty, dealer in wines, liquors, and—votes.

"I mentioned your name to the boss," said Mr. Fogarty easily, "and he said you'd do. So it's a' right, Terence.

You'll be elected, a' right. I'll fix it up with the boys."

The frock-coated one gazed with great melancholy into his beer glass, then shook his head slowly. He had been an alderman once. Why be an alderman again? Why go forth once more into the heat and strife of the day?

"'Tis not in me plans," said he, "to return to public life. I have retired."

"A' right," said the other easily, "then you can retire from my books, too. I've kept you on the debit side of the ledger for five years, waitin' to put you across again. How many drinks have you paid for in that time, Terence?"

The retired statesman gazed unhappily into Mr. Fogarty's eyes.

"I haven't any sort of a platform at all. I haven't the ghost of a platform to stand on."

"Platform—hell!" said Mr. Fogarty vulgarly. "All you need is—"

A noise, rapidly increasing to a hurricane of noises, interrupted Mr. Fogarty in the midst of his observations on a statesman's needs. The two men instinctively glanced at each other.

"Is it a riot?" asked the prospective alderman, without great interest.

Mr. Fogarty rose and went to the front window.

"It isn't a riot," said he. "It's only Mickey Flynn lickin' another lad."

"Is he lickin' him?"

"He is, and he isn't. But it's a fast bout. Come and look, Terence."

The side door burst open with a crash. Little Maggie O'Connor, white to the lips, hopped in like an agitated magpie.

"Papa!" she cried, making for the frock-coated gentleman. "Come quick! They're killin' him!"

At this startling interruption, Mr. Terence O'Connor's whole expression underwent a swift and miraculous change. The false melancholy vanished from his eyes, and into them came a

look unbelievably fond and tender. His rather sodd'n face was quite transfigured by the light of this look.

"Who's killin' who? And what are ye all excited about, little Maggie?"

"It's Mickey Flynn and all! They're hurtin' him! He wasn't doin' a thing! He—"

Mr. O'Connor, now convinced that some desperate injustice was afoot, surged ponderously out of his chair and made for the street door, his footsteps sounding heavy accompaniment to Maggie's tapping crutch.

On the pavement outside the saloon, the entire alley stood in a shrieking circle about the small whirlwind that occasionally resolved itself into Mickey and the king. It was a fast bout, as Mr. Fogarty had said. Once Mickey was on the very point of victory, but instead of delivering a sound buffet, and so administering the coup de grâce, he had elected to pull the stranger's hair. This unseemly action spurred the king to redoubled effort. He was a sturdy little chap, to begin with, and regular hours at the dumb-bells and exercising pulleys had made him sturdier. He twisted himself out of the enemy's grasp, his arms going like flails, and dealt a volley of blows that played havoc with the Almighty's conception of Mickey Flynn's features. Miss Philomena had builded better than she knew when she had installed the punching bag in the playground.

"Pull my hair, will you?" gasped the king, as his fists fell upon the enemy's countenance.

He rushed into close quarters, flung his arms about Mickey's waist, and tugged mightily. The two went down together, but the next instant the king had climbed to a strategic position athwart the enemy's chest, and was pounding the invincible one's nose until the welkin rang.

Then suddenly he felt himself lifted by a great hand. His flailing fists fell

upon the empty air. His feet touched the sidewalk, and he would have leaped once more into the fray but for that restraining hand. He looked up at a huge man in a shiny frock coat, who stood towering above him. The man's other hand was fastened firmly in the sniffling Mickey's collar.

"Lad," said Mr. O'Connor, addressing the king, "what was the causus belly of the late unpleasantness?"

"Let me go!" panted the king. "He pulled my hair!"

The statesman turned an investigating eye upon Mickey Flynn.

"Pulled his hair, did ye?"

"He called me a liar!" sniffed Mickey.

Here was a case that called for tact, wisdom, diplomacy, justice, and a broad knowledge of the human heart; also for the technique and etiquette of fisticuffs—all the various arts, indeed, of the statesman and the pugilist combined. It called, in short, for Mr. Terence O'Connor, and no other. That gentleman's decision was worthy of a Solomon.

"Me lads," said he, "ye have fought, but ye have not fought accordin' to rule. Ye have called names and pulled hair, which is neither Markus of Queensbury *nor* good manners. Come along, now, me bantams."

Taking a firmer grasp of the two contenders for a throne, Mr. O'Connor made off down the alley, followed by a buzzing populace. The king's temper had begun to die away, and instead of the flame in him, there was now only an aching emptiness. A lump came into his throat. His eyes smarted. He did not want to fight any more. He had come searching a kingdom, and had been set upon by a tribe of shrieking savages.

Just at this moment, which was an extremely critical one because of the tears welling behind his eyes, the king felt a light touch upon his sleeve. Twisting about, he saw little Maggie—

Maggie of the crutch and the friendly smile. She was panting with the effort to keep up, and, as the king turned, she leaned forward and whispered fiercely:

"Hit 'im in the belly!"

Then she disappeared, but the king went forward with a light heart. It made a very considerable difference just to have some one tell you to hit him in the belly.

They arrived at a tumble-down grocer's shop, with a show case full of wilted cabbages, and this vague legend upon the window glass:

T. O'CONNOR, GROCERIES, ETC.

Here Mr. O'Connor turned up a narrow passageway which ran alongside the grocer's shop and emptied into a typical back yard of the slums. Old boxes, old barrels, old furniture, old rags, old tins, old what-not, contributed their quota to its cosmopolitan untidiness.

Kicking back some of the rubbish, Mr. O'Connor cleared a space large enough to stage the impending combat. The populace, meanwhile, distributed itself upon the boxes.

"'Tis not Madison Square Garden," said Mr. O'Connor, eying Mickey and the king, "but 'twill serve. Put up your hands, now, me bantams, and remember—no hair pullin'!"

The master of ceremonies sparred reminiscently at space for a moment. Then, recalling the business in hand, he stopped, and tilted his jaunty straw hat forward over his eyes.

"Ready, now," said Mr. O'Connor. "When I say go—go!"

A thrilled silence fell upon the back yard. The watchers, huddled fearfully upon the boxes, held their breath against the time when they should lavish it in praise of Mickey Flynn. Certainly, after one defeat, Mickey would annihilate this pretender. But the pretender himself seemed not to be particularly apprehensive. He was study-

ing that portion of the enemy's anatomy extending from the waistline upward.

"Go!" said Mr. O'Connor.

The battle was one of the briefest ever recorded in the annals of royalist warfare. Upon Mr. O'Connor's "Go!" the king stepped forward briskly, shut his eyes, and swung both hands hard at the enemy's middle.

There was a faint gurgling sound from Mickey the invincible.

There was a sharp exclamation from the master of ceremonies.

There was a sky-piercing shriek from the assembled alley.

The king opened his eyes.

Prone upon the ground lay the deposed Mickey, gripped by some primal agony of spirit. His hands were pressed to the regions of his belt. Breath seemed to him a precious, but quite unattainable, luxury. He writhed, squirmed, shuddered, kicked, and gasped like a fish out of water.

"A clean knock-out in the first round," announced Mr. O'Connor admiringly. He bent over the unhappy Mickey. "Do ye want any more?" he asked hopefully.

"Naw!" wailed Mickey, and there was no doubting the sincerity of the denial.

Mr. O'Connor turned to the king.

"Lad," said he, "ye have won the title, whatever that may be. I wish ye joy of it."

His melancholy having returned, Mr. O'Connor leaned gloomily against an empty apple barrel and observed the actions of the populace as it crowded about victor and vanquished. With a cynic's eye, he observed how the sons and daughters of man wavered in this crisis, neither openly declaring for the stranger nor boldly sympathizing with the fallen hero. Some few of them, indeed, departed silently and without more ado by way of the small passage. The alley had been turned upside down, and they did not know what to make

of the ruins. So, with aboriginal wisdom, they retired to the outskirts of the trouble, withholding their support until such time as it could be granted to their own certain benefit. The rest remained, hypnotized by the indisputable fact that Mickey the invincible had been defeated, both in primitive combat and in gentlemanly affray.

Then Mr. O'Connor, leaning morosely against his apple barrel, was aware of one shining exception to the rule of politic indecision—and his bloated face lighted up once more with tenderness. Out of the crowd, of a sudden, came little Maggie, thrusting her way toward the king. With sparkling eyes, she hobbled through the press until she stood quite close to the victor. Then she smiled, a flashing, glorious smile, and held out to him proudly the tin sword. So might Guinevere have bestowed Excalibur upon her knight.

"I kep' it for you," said little Maggie defiantly; and in that brief statement the alley heard the voice of deathless loyalty speaking. Maggie O'Connor was on the side of the stranger, world without end.

In what way little Maggie's stand might have affected public opinion will never be known, for at that moment a window went up over the grocer's shop, and a head appeared. The head belonged to a woman of billowing bosom, who leaned perilously over the sill to see what went forth in the yard below. Having swept the premises with an outraged glance, the woman put a hand as red as a lobster claw to her lips and called down:

"Mister O'Connor!"

Immediately every eye sought the window, including the slightly blood-shot eye of Mr. O'Connor.

"Is it a Sunday-school picnic," continued the head in the window, "or home rule for Ireland?"

"Me love," said Mr. O'Connor, steadying his somewhat wavering body



"I guess there's maybe a thousand dollars in this bag," he whispered.

by means of the apple barrel, "'tis neither."

"Oh, 'tis neither, is it? And where have ye been these past two hours, Terence O'Connor? 'Tis a wonder ye couldn't stay home and attend to the store, ye great loafer!"

Against these cruel barbs, Mr. O'Connor had no apparent armor. Vast unhappiness clouded his face. He shut his eyes in despair and leaned still more heavily upon the barrel. The virago's gaze now sought the distant Mickey, in whom an immediate uneasiness stirred.

"Mickey Flynn," said the head in the window, "go home! Ye have been fightin' again."

"No'm," said Mickey innocently.

"Ye have been fightin'," repeated Mrs. O'Connor, a trifle more grimly, "and ye have lied to cover it. I will see your mother this night."

"He was fightin', too!" wailed Mickey, pointing to the king.

Mrs. O'Connor looked down upon

the stranger with a melting eye. Something in the boy's direct blue gaze smote her motherly heart with sudden shafts of pity.

"So! And what were ye fightin' about, little man?"

The king gazed helplessly at his questioner. It was perfectly clear in his own mind that he had fought to gain a kingdom, but how could he explain that to a stout woman who seemed to be only a head in a window?

"We fought," said the king, in despair, "because we—we liked it."

Mrs. O'Connor sharply withdrew her head, and, after a brief interim, put it out again with twitching lips.

"Mickey Flynn," said Mrs. O'Connor, "go and shake hands with the lad, and I'll say no word to your mother this night."

Mickey came forward with suspicious alacrity and held out his hand to the foe. A close witness might have noticed a decided lack of warmth on the

part of the deposed monarch, but to Mrs. O'Connor, in her window, the handshake seemed honest enough.

"Mister O'Connor," she said, turning her attention once more to the statesman, "if ye think ye can stand up without the barrel, ye might go into the store and get me a loaf of white bread. I'll be needin' it for dinner."

Stung by this unwisely taunt, Mr. O'Connor promptly severed his connections with the apple barrel; but alas for the frailties of the flesh! His foot caught in a loose hoop, there was a heavy thud, a dull thunder of Mr. O'Connor meeting terra firma. Then arose a wild patter of feet. The catastrophe had been too much for the alley's overwrought nerves. With shrieks of unreasoning panic, the audience fled pell-mell down the passageway, led by Mickey Flynn, the ex-invincible.

Mr. O'Connor's voice was lifted from the dust:

"Come take the hoop off me legs, little Maggie!"

Mrs. O'Connor leaned from her window with flashing eyes.

"Maggie," she said sharply, "come in to dinner, now—and bring the little lad with ye."

CHAPTER VII.

Dinner at the O'Connors' was an informal affair. The meal itself consisted of beans, bread, boiled cabbage, and an extraordinarily weak tea; but the joy of reaching for things unrebuked made it one of the king's very pleasantest experiences.

The O'Connors lived over the grocer's shop of which Mr. O'Connor was at least the legendary proprietor. As a matter of fact, the business—if such it may be called—was left largely to conduct itself. Customers desiring provender of T. O'Connor, Groceries & Etc., were invited by a badly printed notice on the wall to take what

they wanted, and, after consulting the directory of prices, to drop their money into the cracker box near the door. The directory of prices was a large bit of cardboard propped against the rusting scales. Once a day, or thereabouts, Mr. or Mrs. O'Connor—or one of the children—would slip down and make whatever changes were deemed necessary in the market quotations. As a result, the directory was covered with figures upon figures, prices upon prices, so that it was practically a matter of choice with the purchaser whether he would have his potatoes at six or fifteen cents the quart. This lofty indefiniteness as to detail was not without its effect upon the public. The alley flocked to buy its groceries & etc. at the self-conducted shop.

The O'Connors' living quarters were located directly over the store, consisting of a luxurious two-roomed apartment, which one attained after scaling a dark purgatory of stairs, each upward step being flavored with a different degree of the same general odor of boiled cabbage.

Traversing a tiny dark hall, one entered directly the drawing-room, bedroom, reception hall, parlor, library, study, sitting room, and nursery. This versatile chamber was decorated by a picture of Mr. and Mrs. O'Connor in wedding garb, an unframed newspaper portrait of Mr. O'Connor the statesman, another of Mr. O'Connor in skin tights and a tricolored belt, and a symbolic drawing from the back page of the *Journal*, depicting the effects of demon rum upon a young man at a saloon table; this last tacked up by Mrs. O'Connor as a solemn, and at the same time subtle, warning to her lord. A retired washstand, holding an oil lamp, occupied the center of the room. A double bed with a heavy list, a cot, a single bed, a baby's crib, and a broken-spirited chair, stood against the wall. There was a window.

From this chamber one stepped necessarily into the breakfast room, tea room, dining room, laundry, kitchen, pantry, and conservatory. Here stood both stove and table, thus greatly facilitating the preparation and service of meals. The window in this half of the apartment permitted one a rare view of the back yard. Upon its sill, moreover, reposed a drooping geranium, which gave the diners an unusually decorative vista.

Having deposited his side arms in the front room, the king followed little Maggie into this second chamber. A bewildering number of children were seated at the table, eating and making some manner of noise. The O'Connor family, as Mr. O'Connor had remarked in an inspired moment, extended from infinity to infinity. It neither began nor ended. As far as historical research can determine, little Maggie was the eldest. To say certainly who was the youngest is quite impossible. It was a shifting honor, no sooner settled upon one than snatched away by another. Even Mrs. O'Connor herself became slightly confused about this title, so rapidly did it change hands.

As Maggie and the king entered the room, Mrs. O'Connor turned from the stove, a great spoon in her hand, and confronted them. She was a large, shapeless woman, with a red face whose native good humor had been bracketed in two deep, grim lines about her mouth. When she smiled, it was a smile in parentheses. Yet, despite this grimness of countenance, there was something in Mrs. O'Connor's motherly eyes that made the king suddenly begin to love her.

"So this is the lad who was fightin' with Mickey Flynn? Find a place for him at the table, little Maggie; and the rest of ye do try and stop some of the noise. 'Tis near deafened I am!"

Maggie complied by sweeping aside several of the younger brothers and sis-

ters and establishing a place for herself and the king. The clatter of the feast died down for a moment as the stranger slid into his chair. Eyes were turned with shy inquiry in his direction. Then the meal took on its wonted atmosphere. Nothing had been said by way of introduction, but it was clearly understood that the king was to have the freedom of the board.

"If you see anything you want, grab," said Maggie, with the air of one resolved to go to the extreme of hospitality.

Thus encouraged, the king set to work at the huge pile of beans and cabbage with which his plate was burdened. But, although his fork—and, it must be admitted, occasionally his fingers—worked steadily, he nevertheless scarcely tasted a morsel of food that went into his mouth. He sat as one in a dream, dazed by the very number of those about him. The idea of more than one child to a family never before had occurred to him. Here, seated at a single table, was the nucleus of his empire.

"Are there always as many as this?" asked the king, turning to little Maggie, who had not eaten a mouthful for staring at him.

She nodded indifferently. Her thoughts were all of the green country, from which she would nevermore be chased, from whose cool grass and bright flowers and tinkling fountains she would nevermore be turned away. All her tiny, twisted life she had wanted to be a somebody, to walk in the park and play with the neatly starched children who strutted there. Now her time had come, her great hour was at hand.

"We'll take them along," said the king, "for people." And he ran his eye over the infinite O'Connors with extreme satisfaction.

Little Maggie's eyes grew dark with disappointment.

"I thought," she faltered, "it was just goin' to be—you and me."

"Oh, no," said the king. "It's going to be a reg'lar kingdom." Putting his hand to his mouth and leaning closer, he added: "Like's in the fairy tales."

Instant comprehension, mingled with flattering approval, replaced the look of disappointment upon the original citizen's countenance.

"With a real king?"

Her companion glanced about the board, to see that he was not observed; then, gazing at little Maggie, he nodded, at the same time leveling a modest forefinger at his own breast.

"You!"

The king continued to nod.

"I thought it up," he said. Of course, having thought it up, he was privileged to be whatever he chose.

"Will there be a band?" asked little Maggie, whose ideas of a fairy kingdom were somewhat confused with an unforgettable journey to Coney Island in her early youth.

The king gave this question his earnest consideration.

"I guess I'll have a band," said he finally.

"And—dances?"

The king regarded his first citizen dubiously. To be strictly truthful, his program had not included dances—running more to battle and the manly sports—but perhaps it would be well to expand the program so as to provide occupation for both sexes. Then, too, there was such an eager look upon the first citizen's face.

"I guess so," said the king.

But the next moment little Maggie drooped in her chair like a wilted flower. Her eyes filled with tears.

"I forgot," she whispered, looking down at her untouched plate. "I'm nothin' but a lamey! I couldn't dance, anyways!"

The king stared at her in a miserable silence. The bowed head, the quiver-

ing lip, the tear just trembling from the long lashes—these were the manifestations of a sorrow that seemed to him monstrously unjust, unfair, and unreasonable. Why need there be any lameys in the world? Most of all, why need such an affliction be visited upon little Maggie, who was moved to dance by inward harmony and prevented from doing so by outward discord? It was the king's first encounter with the windmill of That-which-is, and he rode at it with a dauntless, quixotic proposal. Groping beneath the table, he found little Maggie's hand.

"What d' you care?" he whispered, in return. "You can be the queen!"

Happiness dawned in little Maggie's eyes as morning dawns in a blue heaven. Her hand clung to the king's. A great lump came into her throat. She could not speak. For the first time since she could remember, she was almost glad to be a lamey.

"Promise!"

"Yes," said the king. "And you can be first in, too!"

First in!

The queen pretended to have dropped something on the floor; this to conceal the welling tears of joy, to hide the flushed face, to gain control of the fluttering breath. First in, and a queen! The king felt something soft and warm on the back of his hand, and forthwith snatched it away; yet I dare say the hand of king was never kissed so sincerely, so tenderly, in all the world before.

At that moment the door was darkened by the huge figure of Mr. O'Connor, who entered with a propitiatory smile, and, as unobtrusively as might be, sank into a groaning chair at the head of the table. It was as if an elephant should attempt to enter a kindergarten without attracting the teacher's attention.

Having drawn his chair up to the board, Mr. O'Connor now produced

from the cavernous pocket of the threadbare frock coat a loaf of bread, which he placed upon the naked table top. His eyes, as he glanced at Mrs. O'Connor standing over the stove, were the eyes of a mastiff that has fetched home the packet intrusted to his care.

"There was no bread in the store," said Mr. O'Connor. "I was forced to go across the street for it."

"More likely to the corner," replied Mrs. O'Connor, launching a chance thrust.

Mr. O'Connor immediately assumed an air of innocent frankness.

"The corner was included in me course," said he. "Indeed, I may say I was there on special business."

"Dan Fogarty's business it was, then!"

"Aye!" roared Mr. O'Connor, overjoyed to have made his point so neatly. "'Twas Dan Fogarty's business. He has offered me the nomination for alderman from this district."

Mrs. O'Connor, for the first time in her long career of stirring potatoes, dropped the great spoon into the cabbage.

"Saints and angels! What did ye say to that, Terence, dear?"

"I said: 'I'll think it over, Daniel. I'll think it over.'"

"Think it over, Terence! Don't ye want to be an alderman again?"

Mr. O'Connor waved his hand.

"That's as may be. Ye don't understand politics. No woman does. I haven't the ghost of a platform——"

"And what is a platform, Terence?"

"A platform," said Mr. O'Connor, "a platform is what ye promise the voters before you're elected."

"If it's nothin' but promises," said Mrs. O'Connor, "ye ought to have a grand good one."

Finding no reply to this, Mr. O'Connor, following world-old precedent, pretended he had not heard it. He turned to beans and cabbage, and Mrs. O'Connor,

repenting a little of her verbal dart, heaped his plate with a fresh helping of the provender. As she leaned above her melancholy statesman, the king distinctly saw her stoop and kiss Mr. O'Connor's unshaven cheek. From that moment, he loved Mrs. O'Connor very much indeed, which was a curious thing.

Nor was he in the least awed, any longer, by Mr. O'Connor's grand manner and impressive frock coat. He had a feeling that it was all a great game, and that Mr. and Mrs. O'Connor were children, too—children who were playing at being grown up. So when, a little later, Mr. O'Connor's eyes met his, the king smiled in the friendliest fashion. Whereupon, Mr. O'Connor rose and bowed with some ceremony.

"'Tis the lad who licked Mickey Flynn," said he, beaming.

"Twice," said the king, who had not yet quite forgiven Mr. O'Connor for making him win his battle a second time.

"You're a hard-hittin' little tike," observed Mr. O'Connor, nodding his head. "Maybe ye'll be a champeen some day."

"I was going to be," said the hard-hitting little tike, "but I'm not now."

"And why not?"

"Because I'm going to be a king."

"Sure, that's a grand business. What would you be the king of, little man?"

"Of the park," said my bold monarch, with a glance at his first citizen.

Whereat, little Maggie precipitated herself into the conversation with trembling eagerness:

"And I'm goin' to be the queen!"

Mr. O'Connor leaned back in his chair, a sudden, meditative light in his eyes. He was overcome, doubtless, by the thought of being parent to a queen.

"He has the key," continued little Maggie breathlessly, pointing to the king, "and they can't chase us out any more."

"No more they should," growled Mr.

O'Connor, with a toss of his democratic mane. "The parks," he added, bringing his fist down upon the table, as if making a political speech, "ought to be free and equal to every man, woman, and child!" His eyes now had a distant look, a look of contemplated visions.

"There's no fun playin' in the alley," said little Maggie wistfully. "It's too—*bricky!* I wish I could bring the park here, and *live* in it!"

"Glory be!" roared Mr. O'Connor, suddenly springing to his feet. "'Tis me platform!"

"Whatever do ye mean?" cried Mrs. O'Connor, dropping once more the almost rescued spoon.

"I mean—make an issue of it," said the statesman, staring down at the nucleus of empire. "More space for the childer to play in. More sunshine, more fresh air, more grass, more trees, more flowers—more *green!* By St. Patrick, there was never such a platform in all the history of the district!"

CHAPTER VIII.

It was that confidential hour after luncheon when the affairs of the world are settled upon a full stomach, and settled wisely for that reason. The king and queen sat cross-legged upon a shelf in the grocer's shop, facing each other. This dusty cliff commanded a clear view of the alley, and was high enough to insure its occupants against detection. Except for a rather perilous ascent by way of packing boxes piled on end, it provided an admirable retreat for a lamey. The shelf was Maggie's favorite cloister, and there she had taken the king directly luncheon had been concluded.

Forthwith, the two began to plot the establishment of their kingdom. Their first concern, naturally enough, was the procurement of a populace. The king, it must be said, had underestimated the difficulty of this part of the venture.

His plan had been merely to issue invitations for the enfranchisement of all persons not over eight-going-on-nine; but it seemed that one could not do business in this brusque manner. Maggie pointed out that the alley was still loyal to Mickey Flynn, or at least to his memory, and would remain so unless immediate steps were taken to divert its fickle fancy. In this crisis, the king turned instinctively to a woman, as many another king has done. Nor did it seem that his confidence was misplaced.

"What's that sort of a jingle in your pocket?" asked Maggie, with inspired suspicion.

The king promptly produced the marble bag and began to fumble at the draw string.

"Want to know something?"

"Yes."

"I got a thousand dollars in this bag, maybe."

"It looks like pennies," said the queen doubtfully, as the golden flood was poured into her lap. Then she glanced up quickly, with a little shy smile. "I know! You *pretended!*"

"That's nothing," said the king. "Once I pretended I had all the money in the world!"

"So did I!" The confession came in an awed whisper.

"What d'you do with yours?" asked the king.

"I bought the red plush crutch in Maxman's window."

Once again the king detected the presence of unjust sorrow, so he said hastily:

"You could have a lot of fun with a crutch, hopping around—and everything."

"I'll take you to see this one!" cried little Maggie, delighted to have been thought original. Then suddenly she leaned forward, pointing toward the street. "There's Mickey Flynn now!"

The king glanced into the alley.

There, indeed, was Mickey Flynn. He stood at the opposite curb, a large green pickle in his hand, and kicked at bits of rubbish with an air of leisurely nonchalance. Intermittently he refreshed himself with the pickle. He appeared to be waiting for a turn in the tide of fortune.

Soon other children came into the street, evidently fresh from the midday meal. Scarcely one of these but held in a grimy fist some bit of bread, cracker, fruit, or sweet. Several, indeed, had elected to consume entire courses in the public gaze. The newcomers gravitated slowly about Mickey Flynn, until shortly that young man found himself the center of a throng that stood in silent sympathy upon the pave, sighing when Mickey sighed, nibbling when Mickey nibbled. It was evident that Maggie had analyzed her world correctly. The alley was still loyal to Mickey Flynn.

Now a ragged henchman, burning for his leader's revenge, stepped quite close to Mickey, and, making a scrawny fist, first shook it at the O'Connors' upper windows, and then significantly touched eye, nose, mouth, and cheek. Following which, he turned and gave Mickey Flynn a heartening whack across the shoulders. But Mickey only sighed and shook his head. He was not one to invite disaster a second time.

"I'll go down," said the king, preparing to abandon the shelf, "and dast him over."

But Maggie grasped her consort's arm. With true intuition, she perceived that it was a case for the wisdom of the serpent rather than for the strength of the lion.

"Don't pay any 'tention to him," said the queen. "He's just a big— Ssh! Do you hear music?"

The king listened intently, then nodded. Faintly distinguishable from the clamor of the world beyond the window, there sounded the thin strains of

some painful lyric. These strains grew steadily louder until it was almost possible to identify the tune at which they labored. Little Maggie, clasping the king's arm with tense fingers, leaned far out over the shelf, peering toward the corner of the alley.

"Look!" cried Maggie suddenly. "It's the merry-go-round!"

A curious contrivance, half ordinary wagon, half divine chariot, was progressing through the alley at the heels of two proud steeds whose headstalls were decorated with great waving plumes of red, white, and blue. A smiling Italian, with a cockade in his hat, guided the chariot upon its course. This Italian was a versatile fellow, combining as he did a masterly horsemanship with the high genius of the musician. For, while one hand controlled the gaudy steeds, the other turned the handle of an upright street piano, which stood upon the fore part of the wagon, directly behind the driver's seat. As the divine vehicle proceeded, the voice of this instrument was lifted in song.

The gay driver, the plumed horses, the trumpeting piano—these, however, were but preludes to the crowning glory of the chariot. Behold upon its creaking bed a miniature merry-go-round, canopied, bedecked, caparisoned, hung with flags and bunting, and painted with thrilling scenes of love and war! This miracle occupied the center of the wagon, and was placed upon a pivot, so that, by turning a crank, it could be made to revolve in a dizzy orbit of joy. Four prancing mustangs, pinned through the middle by steel rods, like a zoölogist's specimens, invited the populace to mount and ride upon the wings of equestrian fancy. For those less adventurously inclined, two highly decorative seats were provided. A tiny flight of steps led up to the merry-go-round. A second Italian, whose genius ran to bone and muscle, trudged blandly in the wake of the crawling vehicle. He was



"Ya-a!" sneered Mickey. "Tin soldier! What you doin' in O'Connor's Alley?"

a man of mighty sinews, of broad shoulders and sound wind. He was, in short, the man who turned the crank.

The attraction rolled up to the curb, coming to a halt directly in front of Mickey and his host of admirers. The driver rose, bowed toward the thick of the crowd, hung his reins upon a hook provided for the purpose, and proceeded to strike up an entirely new and irresistible tune. The substantial Italian at the rear gave the merry-go-round

a twirl or two and set out a small sign, printed in three languages, the English version of which read:

ONE RIDE, ONE SCENT.

The merry-go-round was now prepared to do business.

But business is a fickle jade. Promising as the alley had seemed from the mouth of it, overrun as it was with children, nevertheless the merry-go-round spun empty for two whole

tunes. Then a few modest adventurers mounted the steps, paying their fees into the hand of him who supplied the motive power and climbing with conscious superiority to the backs of the pinioned mustangs. A new tune was inaugurated. Forward sped the adventurers, until such time as it seemed they might grow ill of the motion. Then the sagacious cranker, with an eye to the comfort as well as to the pleasure of his patrons, reversed the process and set them to galloping backward. Thus the qualms of dizziness were allayed, and when the music had come to a well-deserved end, the equestrians dismounted, feeling refreshed both in body and in spirit. Others took their places, yet not with that avidity which marks the visitation of good business.

Mickey Flynn was among those conspicuously absent from the festivities. He stood with one hand thrust deep into a torn pocket, a scowl upon his face, a green pickle at his lips, fairly hurling disapproval at the merry-makers. About him stood the main forces of the alley, also scowling, also outwardly disapproving; but beneath this veneer of contempt there was to be observed a certain wistfulness, a certain desire, a certain hope, perhaps, that Mickey would relent of his condemnatory attitude and lead them to happiness by way of the galloping mustangs. In the breasts of these retainers, moreover, was a growing suspicion that Mickey himself would have enjoyed a ride on the merry-go-round, if he could have secured it; in fine, that his assumption of dignified scorn for the proceedings was a sham, a mask, a confession of weakness.

Here was a crisis that demanded, not passive indifference, but active financing. Funds were needed for the alley's enjoyment. It was the time for clever manipulation of securities, for the rapid converting of commodities into cash, for the flotation, in short, of

a public loan; but Mickey only continued to eat a pickle.

Upon the shelf in the grocer's shop, the king and queen sat watching the struggle between joy and a green pickle. Suddenly little Maggie's eyes began to sparkle with excitement. Grasping the king's arm, she unfolded a plan that for sheer cunning and diplomacy would have been worthy of an Elizabeth. The next moment the king was wriggling backward off the shelf, the red marble bag clutched in his hand.

Mickey Flynn, standing in the midst of his admirers, looked up to see the king crossing the street. The pickle dropped from Mickey's hand. He took an involuntary step backward, then checked himself. He could not beat a retreat in the presence of his retainers.

But the king gave no evidence of being belligerently inclined. Pushing through the crowd, which gave way readily enough, he approached the curb where Mickey stood blackly scowling. The merry-go-round had just concluded its fourth tune. In the ensuing silence, spoke the king:

"Want a ride?"

Mickey's mouth opened, closed again. Instinctively he feared the Greeks bearing gifts.

"Aw, g'wan!" he ventured noncommittally.

Then, in the presence of the entire alley, the king drew from his pocket the red marble bag and took from it a glittering, bewildering handful of new pennies. These he held out in his open palm. A gasp went up from the crowd.

"I—I don't care if I do," said Mickey, swallowing hard.

The king turned to the fickle throng, now drawn in a breathless circle about him.

"You can all get on, if you want to," he said.

If they wanted to! Immediately business with the merry-go-round became good, became very good, became excel-

lent. Old allegiances forgot, the alley rushed to the foot of the tiny steps, surging clamorously against the knees of the sagacious cranker, who, having perceived the source of this golden onslaught, suddenly caught the king out of the press and lifted him to the saddle of the tallest mustang. The alley burst into wild cheers.

Mickey Flynn came next, mounting the steed immediately behind the king. Four or five others followed. The merry-go-round was pronounced to be filled. The music blared. The cranker cranked. Amid the applause of the joyous populace, the circular platform began to turn faster, faster, until the king and his erstwhile enemy became one continuous streak of joy incarnate.

And upon her shelf in the grocer's shop, the cause of it all sat rocking to and fro and whispering rapturously to herself:

"Queen Maggie! Queen Maggie! Queen Maggie!"

The wheezy piano poured out its metallic soul in song. The gay driver musician turned and turned its rattling handle until his smile became fixed and wooden. The perspiration of honest toil streamed upon the face of the sagacious cranker. Finally, glancing over the backs of the pinioned mustangs, he caught the eye of his talented brother. A look passed between them. The merry-go-round suddenly stopped turning. The piano breathed its last.

"Alla gone!" panted the cranker to the king. "No mora da turn around." And he leaned against the divine chariot, wiping his brow.

"Wait a minute—please!"

The king turned and dashed across the alley, leaped the sidewalk in a bound, and burst excitedly into the grocer's shop.

"Maggie," cried the king, "come quick and have a ride! It's going away! Hurry!"

"I—I don't think they'll wait. I—"

"Yes, they will, too! Come on!"

Not only was the merry-go-round waiting, but the entire alley as well. Maggie's instinct, as she fronted the familiar rag, tag, and bobtail, was to turn and flee. They had never been kind to her, those little wolves; but a glance at the sturdy boy beside her drove all such unqueenly thoughts from her mind. She shut her lips tight and hopped bravely into the limelight of a great publicity.

The exhausted cranker still leaned heavily against his chariot, but when he saw the king approaching with a little lame girl, he forthwith sprang to his post, the ghost of a gallant smile illuminating his perspiring features.

But observe who comes to hand the lame queen up the steps—another Raleigh in rags! It is Mickey Flynn, no less; Mickey the vanquished, but never Mickey the nonentity. As Maggie approached, with scarlet cheeks and brave eyes, Mickey placed a courtier's hand beneath her patched elbow and gave a perfunctory push upward, completing the gesture with a graceful flourish which indicated to the world that he had officially assisted at the ascent of the king's favorite. What more natural, following this official ceremony, than that he should follow the king up the steps and leap to the saddle of an attendant steed? If this chanced to be Mickey's eighth free ride, what then?

"Let 'er go!" called the king.

The queen closed her eyes and clutched the sides of her revolving throne. She was gloriously, splendidly dizzy, and happier than she had ever been in all her life before.

CHAPTER IX.

Mid-afternoon in O'Connor's Alley. Behind a high bulwark of rubbish in the historic back yard, the king and Mickey Flynn sat earnestly plotting the great adventure. Upon a discarded

cracker box, a few paces away, sat little Maggie, elbows on her knees, chin in her hands, her glance fixed warily upon the king's face. When he needed diplomatic assistance, she came spontaneously to the rescue; when ideas lagged, she supplied new ideas.

"Why don't we *live* in the park?" suggested little Maggie, during a lull in the plotting.

"All right," said the king promptly.

Mickey Flynn gazed at him gloomily.

"You goin' to have girls in it?" he asked.

It was a question that had troubled many a taller monarch. But the king was a progressive.

"Girls can do a lot of things," he ventured.

"What can they do?"

"They can sew and cook and—and be the queen."

"I don't see what good a queen is," said Mickey pessimistically.

At this anarchistic observation, the king was almost nonplused. Evidently Mickey Flynn's education had been neglected.

"Why, they *always* have a queen!"

Mickey considered this statement in silence.

"What else do they have?" he inquired finally.

"Battles," said the king, "and armies and——"

"Mickey can be captain of the army," improvised little Maggie, cunningly contriving to poke the king's foot with her crutch.

"You can be captain," echoed the grateful monarch.

Mickey spat enthusiastically into the dust.

"I'll get up an army, all right," said he.

Rising, he kicked his own cracker box into a distant corner of the yard, which, being interpreted, meant that Mickey had resigned his seat in the council for the pleasanter hazards of

active service. He put his fingers into his mouth, curled back his lips, and produced a noise that seemed to be the peculiar art of the alley.

"What are you whistling for?" asked the king.

"For the gang," said Mickey.

Scarcely had the vibrations of that shrill whistle ceased when the first of the alley's hordes thrust eager faces into the back yard. There was a light of eternal quest in the eyes of these small vagabonds. They were like little starved scavengers, eternally nosing out the small bones of excitement that fell to their lot, forever wistfully trailing some golden quarry of a dream. They were the other children, gathered together by some indefinable hope; and the king, watching them pour through the passageway, felt sorrier for them than he had ever felt before. He wanted to leap up, then and there, and lead them away to the green country, where the grass was cool and sweet and the trees nodded in the wind. But that time was not yet.

The mobilization of O'Connor's Alley proceeded with admirable dispatch. Both boys and girls came running down the passageway, the latter in most cases clutching round-eyed babies to their breasts. Leading the procession came the clan O'Connor, which neither began nor ended. Then came Sadie and Isador and Samuel Goronivinsky, with Baby Goronivinsky a matter of dispute between them. Came the Fogarty girls, in pink gingham, which they wore with an air. The Fogarty girls represented the aristocracy of the alley, their father owning the corner saloon and the votes of the ward. Came the Giovanni Farinas, children of a slowly expiring candy business across the alley.

"Here comes Benny Ernspicker," announced Mickey, in an official aside to the king. "He's got a first-hand harmonicon. He can be the band."

Came the Levinsky twins, Isaac and

Morris; and Susie Costello, with Baby Costello wriggling at her small, flat breast; and Yetta Horowitz; and the six Maxmans, five boys and a girl; and the Graziolas and the Einsteins and the Murphys and the Schmidts.

"Heinie Schmidt got a drum last Chris'mus," announced Mickey. "He can be the band with Benny."

The chief of staff stood erect upon a small heap of rubbish and addressed the multitude. His words were brief and to the point, as a soldier's words should be.

"We're all goin' to run away," said Mickey Flynn.

The alley drew a great breath and exhaled it slowly. Here was a project to snare the imagination, to quicken the pulse. Immediately all eyes were shifted from Mickey to the king. With unerring instinct, the alley perceived that this was but another instance of the stranger's daring originality. The best that Mickey had ever done was to lead them to the river for a contraband swim.

The chief of staff, observing that he was, at best, but an adjunct to greatness, pointed to the king and said, in slow and solemn tones:

"He has bought the park."

Now, in that particular province of the slums, there was but one park. Other bits of green country might lie with flung gates to north and south, like small oases in a desert of paving stones, but when one said "the park" one meant the forbidden kingdom of the iron gates, which opened only to a shining key in the hands of the eternally blest. There was not a tatterdemalion in the back yard who had not laid cheek, at one time or another, to the iron fence and longed for a miracle to melt it away. It was the alley's promised land, not far removed from that heaven which one inhabited, according to orthodox rumor, when one died. Hence, Mickey's statement was

received in a superlative silence, out of which was presently lifted one voice of inevitable doubt:

"Ah, g'wan!"

"Show 'em the key!" said Mickey, gazing scornfully in the direction of the voice.

The king rose, tugging at his pocket. It was the same pocket from which he had drawn the magic bag somewhat earlier in the afternoon. The alley rose and crowded about him, craning their necks to see. Then, out of the heart of the throng, the king's hand shot skyward. Between thumb and forefinger was to be observed a glittering key!

The voice of the doubter was heard no more in the land.

Yet, even as doubt vanished, objection arose. Sadie Goronivinsky, whose young life was linked to that of the infant Goronivinsky, became suddenly smitten with the cold actualities of life as opposed to this delightful day-dreaming.

"I couldn't go it no runaways!" cried Sadie. "I got to stay home and be a mamma on the baby."

Poor little Sadie! At the age of seven, she voiced the wail of womanhood.

The germ of objection spread to the Levinsky twins.

"We'd get it a lickin'," said the eldest twin, who spoke for the family.

"So would we!" echoed the Graziolas and the Murphys and the Einsteins and the Schmidts. The certainty of this fate appeared to be unanimous.

Little Maggie O'Connor rose, flaming, on her crutch.

"You won't get a lickin' if you don't tell. We're goin' to the park and lock all the gates and live there!"

"What do we live in?" demanded one of the Fogarty young ladies, who, as a member of the aristocracy, must concern herself with these small conventions.

The alley looked at the king interrogatively, but with perfect trust.

"Tents," said that personage promptly.

It had popped into his head upon the instant, and was too obvious an inspiration to be denied. Miss Fogarty subsided. But Heinie Schmidt, whose well-rounded body proclaimed him to be a patron of the fleshpots, propounded a new and even more vital question:

"What do we have to eat?"

"We shoot things!"

Little Maggie's protest was drowned in a general shout of approbation from the male contingent of the alley. Whereat the king, perceiving that the time was now ripe, suggested to Captain Mickey that he proceed with the enlistment of troops.

"Why don't you get up the army?" asked the king.

A cheer swept the back yard. There was a spontaneous rush forward, as always at a call to arms, and straightway the chief of staff found himself surrounded by eager volunteers who clamored to be placed upon the military rolls.

"You're all in the army," cried Mickey, in desperation, "except Benny Ernspicker and Heinie Schmidt."

From these two young gentlemen promptly went up a howl of protest.

"Aw," said Mickey, "you ain't goin' to get left out! You're the band."

Pride replaced the look of outraged justice upon the faces of the protesting twain. Any man can be a soldier, but only those especially appointed by nature can be the band.

At this point, little Maggie, who had vanished temporarily from the alley's councils, reappeared upon the outskirts of the crowd, the tin sword waving in her hand. It was the second time she had returned the king his blade, but whereas in the first instance she had been flying in the face of public opin-

ion, now she was borne upon the very tide of it.

"You left this upstairs," said little Maggie, as the glittering weapon passed from her hand to his.

Proudly she watched the king buckle it about his waist. He was a gallant figure, thus armed, and one that invited immediate imitation. Forthwith, the entire masculine portion of the alley was gripped by a desire to own and wear such a weapon.

"What do *we* have?" demanded Mickey enviously.

There was a mutter of approval from all citizens of the military sex. What did *they* have? Little Maggie, loyal as she was, could not but glance apprehensively at the king. It was a serious question, and she doubted if he had money enough left to provide armament for the entire alley. But the king was gazing speculatively at the litter of old boxes that strewn the back yard.

"If I had a hatchet——"

"There's one in the store!" cried Maggie, hurrying, with renewed hope, toward the rear of the grocer's shop.

Soon she was back with an implement that, for all its age, still possessed those two main requirements of a hatchet—an edge and a handle.

A moment later, the king was on his knees hacking away at an empty box, with O'Connor's Alley in an entranced, bright-eyed circle about him. He himself, in the period before the acquisition of the tin sword, had wrought in the playroom smithy such arms as now he forged for the edification and accouterment of his troops. First stripping a long shaft from the side of the box, he hacked one end of it into a belligerent point. Then, cutting a short piece, he arranged it crosswise on the haft of the potential blade, and, with a nail loosened in the general destruction of the box, fastened the two pieces together with a triumphant series of blows from the blunt end of the hatchet.

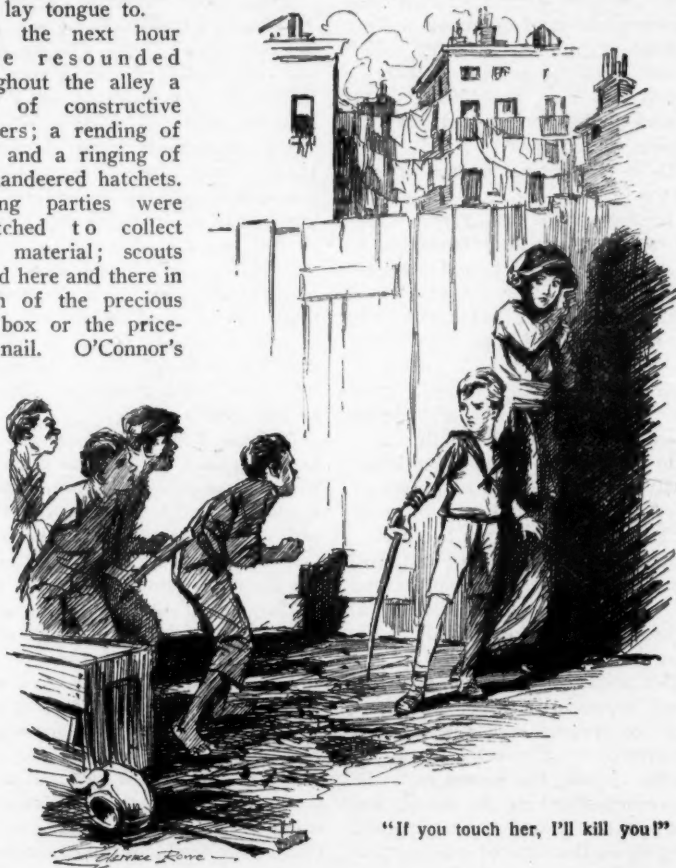
Flushed with his success, the king rose, and, seizing the wooden sword by its rough, but unmistakable, point, presented it, with a flourish, to Mickey Flynn. Mickey, overwhelmed by such an honor, acknowledged it by spitting violently into space and thrusting the sword through a convenient rent in the top of his trousers.

"So help me God!" shrieked Mickey, who, bursting with the enthusiasm of the moment, must needs pledge his loyalty and affection in the only oath-sounding phrase he could lay tongue to.

For the next hour there resounded throughout the alley a noise of constructive thunders; a rending of wood and a ringing of commandeered hatchets. Raiding parties were dispatched to collect more material; scouts dashed here and there in search of the precious soap box or the priceless nail. O'Connor's

Alley was arming for the king's adventure, enthusiastically aided by its womenfolk, who risked life and limb holding the crosspieces while their lords pounded.

One by one the wooden swords were completed, until by the time the afternoon sun began to burn red in its little patch of slum sky, a fine, impressive pile of weapons stood in the sliver-carpeted back yard, and all at the inconsequential cost of a few splinters under



"If you touch her, I'll kill you!"

the skin. Never was an empire armed so cheaply.

And just then the broken gate in the fence swung open, with a squeak and a groan, and a woman came through the gate. She was dressed all in black, save for a bit of cheap red ribbon at her throat. Her face was pale, but there was a sort of faded beauty about her, like the beauty of a flower that has been shriveled in the sun. Her eyes were like stars gone to ashes. She was neither young nor old. When she saw the children, she paused. One hand fluttered to her breast. Bitter lines crept out and robbed her face of any softness.

O'Connor's Alley had turned at the opening of the gate. Seeing the woman, they immediately began to chant amazing maledictions.

"Ya, bad woman! Bad woman!" rose the surprising singsong, to the accompaniment of a steady hissing.

• They crept closer, like a pack of hungry little wolves. A stick went hurtling through the air and touched the edge of the somber woman's skirt. She stood with her back to the fence, scorning escape, regarding, with a still, terrible smile, the antics of the little wolves who yapped at her feet.

Evidently it was an old game, this hunting of the bad woman. Indeed, the alley had long considered her legitimate quarry, to be run to earth wherever found. They had not the slightest notion of her crimes and offenses, but they knew that she was a woman whispered about, and that there would be no reproof from their elders for snapping at her heels.

Another stick flew through the air, this time with deadlier aim. The woman put her hand to her face in a bewildered way, as if doubting the actuality of this last insult. A thin streak of crimson trickled across her cheek. In a blaze of fury, she came at her tormentors.

Then suddenly a shrill voice rose hotly above the babel of shrieks and hisses:

"If you touch her, I'll kill you!"

Slowly the woman's clenched fists relaxed. In the little clear space between the wolves and their quarry stood the king, shaking in that awful storm of his temper, the tin sword cutting and whistling ominously in the faces of his mutinous kingdom.

The woman's hands went convulsively to her throat. She saw the sunlight on the king's yellow hair, and the brave, splendid, ridiculous glitter of his make-believe sword; and then, as if she had beheld a blinding vision, the bad woman flung her arm across her eyes, turned, and stumbled back through the gate in the fence.

Behind him, the king heard the closing gate. The fire of his temper—his strange, explosive temper—began to wane and grow cold. Still he stood and faced his people, for the second time that day.

But now no champion came through the cheering ranks to do him battle. He was the king, and they could not meet his eyes. One by one they stole away, those little shamed wolves, calling to each other with elaborate carelessness that supper must be about ready now.

The king stood watching them go, bewildered, lonely, and unhappy—vastly unhappy because of the drooping flame in his heart and the long shadows reaching down from heaven into his domain. Mickey was the last to go, Mickey Flynn, whom he had first vanquished and then raised to power.

"So long," said Mickey, with averted eyes. "See you to-morrow."

Children grow quickly tired of their games. When the dark draws down, great adventures cease, and small adventurers turn wearily home. But if you are the king, you must not grow tired. You must hold fast to your dreams and have faith. The king

looked upon his departing captain's back and trumped up a smile.

"To-morrow!" called the king.

He turned, choking with loneliness—and found himself looking into the loyal blue eyes of little Maggie.

CHAPTER X.

They stood by the heap of wooden swords, alone in a world of dimming light and hushing sound. The day was only a blur of gold above the crowding roofs. The voices of the street had fallen to a low murmur. Strong odors of cooking filled the air. It was supper time in O'Connor's Alley.

"Are you hungry?" asked the queen softly.

"Not s' very."

The king put his hands into his pockets, which is always comforting, and kicked apathetically at a bit of rubbish.

"I know where any one can get ice-cream cones, two for a nickel," observed Maggie, as one who shoots an arrow aimlessly into the air.

The king removed his hands from his pockets and looked at the lame queen with awakened interest. In the matter of entrancing ideas, she was worth the rest of his empire put together.

"Where?"

"Just around the corner, at John the Candyman's."

"Come on!" said the king. "I'm hungry now."

They crept out of the shadowy back yard into a street for once empty of its hordes. High above the chimney tops, a star-hemmed patchwork sky showed faintly pink and gold and lavender—a poor man's quilt flung by a poor man's God over the roofs of the beggar city. So faint was the light that John the Candyman had touched off his whining, weak-flamed oil lamp, whose indefinite finger flickered this way and that in the breeze, as if beckoning the

chance pedestrian to sample the wares upon which it laid a tarnished glory.

John the Candyman was the proud proprietor of a stand that devoted itself impartially to chewing gum, newspapers, tobacco, sweets, poisonous rainbow-colored liquids, and a certain species of ice cream that in a former incarnation had been closely related to the genus cornstarch. But the poor are not particular save as to price, and John the Candyman had a gift for prices.

Drawn by the beckoning finger of light, the two adventurers drew close to the counter.

"Two ice-cream cones," demanded Maggie, and added prudently, "for a nickel."

John the Candyman produced two brown cones from the magic recesses below the counter. Then, brandishing in his right hand a huge pewter spoon, he leaned toward them, suavely smiling.

"Choc'late or—vanilla?"

The first word was pronounced with a slurring contempt; the second with a lingering rapture. Evidently, in the candyman's estimation, vanilla was the thing to choose. The selection of chocolate, one deduced, would brand the purchaser inevitably as a person of low tastes and bourgeoisie palate. The shameful truth was that John the Candyman made a greater profit from vanilla than from chocolate, the latter requiring a certain muddy coloring matter that lessened his dividends. But in the present instance, alas, he was dealing with a member of the contrary sex.

"We'll have chocolate," said Maggie firmly.

So they had chocolate, much to the candyman's chagrin, and the king, drawing out his money bag, deposited five bright pennies upon the bare wooden counter. He counted them aloud, secure in the knowledge that he could have gone as high as ten.

Having paid their score, Maggie and the king stood side by side in the friendly glitter of the colored bottles and silently consumed the fruits of their extravagance. The patchwork quilt faded out of the heavens above them. The candyman's single light flowered over their heads like a little soiled star, fallen into the street by reason of some reprehensible human appetite.

"Mine's done," said Maggie, with a sigh.

"So's mine."

They turned back toward the mouth of the alley, walking slowly, sobered by the thought that such delight should have fled so soon.

"Maggie," said the king, "I'd like to buy you something that you could keep always."

The queen stopped short and faced him.

"Oh!" she whispered.

"Something that you want—like the red plush crutch—or something."

A sudden choking sob caused him to glance up in dismay. Queen Maggie was crying!

"Don't you want it?" asked the king, feeling somehow that he had made a dreadful mistake.

Maggie nodded fiercely, dashing the tears from her eyes.

"I want it," she said, in a low, tense voice, "so they won't laugh at me any more. They wouldn't laugh if I had that—because it's *pretty*—for a crutch." Her eyes were burning brightly in the dusk. The traces of tears had vanished. "There's red plush on top," she said, "and shiny paint all over. It's just—grand! I thought maybe last Chris'mus — Oh, I wanted it so!"

"If you wanted it," asked the king, from the depths of a purely masculine bewilderment, "why did you cry?"

"Because," said little Maggie.

They walked in silence toward the corner. The king was still pondering

his companion's reply, finding himself baffled, as many another of his sex has been, by that brief, mysterious word. Suddenly Maggie caught his arm in a convulsive grasp.

"Look!" she breathed.

In a window, decorated by every known species of human bauble, from dusty violins to gleaming daggers, from cuff links to accordions, from stuffed birds to statued saints, stood the red plush crutch. It dominated the window, rising elegantly from a nest of miscellaneous articles, in shape graceful, in complexion smoothly polished, in embellishment richly aristocratic. It *was* pretty—for a crutch. There was an air of luxury about it, of elegance overcoming pathos, of refinement leavening disability—in short, of spirit triumphing over flesh.

A light still burned in the pawnshop. Boris Maxman, owner of the red plush crutch, and of many another mysterious treasure, kept perennial business hours.

"Isn't it beautiful?" whispered Maggie, her nose against the windowpane.

"Best I ever saw," agreed the king, with the air of a connoisseur of crutches.

"No one could ever buy it," said Maggie, in a tone of hopeless conviction. Nor to her mind did it seem as if any one ever could. Priceless are the objects of the heart's desire.

But the king that day had financed the purchase of an empire. He was not to be put off thus easily by a red plush crutch.

"I'll bet I could," said he, and strode to the pawnshop entrance.

Little Maggie followed, her heart beating wildly. The king pushed open the door. A shrill bell tinkled unexpectedly. Out of the shadows of the shop a little man in a skullcap came, rubbing his hands and peering about.

"Ah!" he said. "Vot iss it, liddle nuisances?"

"How much for the red plush

crutch?" asked the king boldly, though, to tell the truth, he found it shivery business bargaining in such a shadowy shop with such a shadowy little man.

The shopkeeper thrust a snaky hand into the window space, and, after some fumbling, drew forth the crutch. In an agony of suspense, little Maggie waited, while Boris Maxman squinted at a small white card dangling from the crossbar of the treasure.

"It iss two dollars fifty cents," he said sourly.

Maggie's face whitened. She took a step toward the door. To spend two dollars and fifty cents for mere happiness was absolutely unthinkable.

The king's money bag fell, with a musical jingle, upon the glass counter.

"You count it," said the king.

Boris Maxman's snaky hands went out instinctively to the jingling bag. His fingers seemed to find and solve the knot by some uncanny magic. Then out upon the counter streamed the bright tide of the king's fortune.

"Bennies!" growled the Jew.

Maggie plucked the king's sleeve.

"Come away," she whispered. "He's mad at us. He——"

The king looked squarely at the unpleasant little shopkeeper.

"Take how much it is," he said. "I can only count up to ten."

The wraith of a smile flickered over the Jew's sharp features. He began to claw at the pennies, arranging them in neat piles and muttering as he did so. Suddenly he paused in the count and stared at little Maggie.

"Iss it for you—de crutch?"

"Yes," replied Maggie faintly.

"Maybe it iss too big for you. Den I should haf all my droubles for nodings."

Maggie tucked the red plush crutch under her arm and took a few proud steps about the shop. Then she laughed shyly.

"It's just right," she said.

As a matter of fact, it was not just right; but what is a half inch or so compared to red plush on top and shiny paint all over? He who reckons happiness by half inches misses it by half miles.

The Jew returned to his counting. "Dere iss nod enough," said he. "Dere iss here only two dollars twenty-von cents."

Not enough! The unexpected verdict fell with cruel force upon the ears of Maggie and the king. The world took on its wonted atmosphere of drab, monotonous disappointment. There was no such thing as dreams come true, after all. Not enough!

"Iss dis all de bennies you got, liddle nuisances?"

The king nodded. He could not trust himself to speak.

"All right," said the Jew gruffly. "De crutch iss sold for two dollars twenty-von cents. Get oudt!"

"You mean it's mine?" cried little Maggie, beginning to tremble from head to foot.

"Sold!" said the shopkeeper. "Don't you know vot iss? Get oudt! I will keep de old crutch in partial payment."

The door closed behind them. The little bell tinkled softly. They stood in the dark entranceway, dazed by the unexpected success of their apparently hopeless venture.

"You haven't a penny left!" said little Maggie, turning to the king.

"I don't care. It weighed down my pocket."

Then, before he could forestall the disaster, little Maggie had flung her arm about his neck and kissed him fairly on the cheek.

"I love you! I love you!" whispered little Maggie.

The king drew back, tingling with strange emotions, his face hot, his mind confused.

"I—I guess I'd better be going now,"

said the king, stepping out upon the sidewalk.

At that instant a very large woman in a gingham apron came puffing around the corner, peering into doorways with anxious eyes, a great spoon—of which she was apparently unaware—in her hand. She approached the pawnshop rapidly, waving the spoon, breathing hard. Suddenly she stopped short, with a cry:

"Little Maggie! Saints be praised! Where have ye been, and what are ye doin' out so late?"

There are moments in every monarch's life when retreat seems not only prudent, but also highly desirable. The king caught up the tin sword, turned, and fled into the night.

CHAPTER XI.

Now, as he ran, it seemed that something ran with him, just at his shoulder, as those unspeakable somethings run in dreams. He knew that if he stopped and turned about, it would not be there—which made him run all the faster. He was only a little boy now, and the dark was down. Strange lights flowered through the dusk, lights that confused rather than cleared the way. The blurred buildings seemed to stoop like shabby giants, leering at him with their many eyes. The street lamps cast yellow pools at his feet. A door swung open, and a great figure reeled out, laughing uproariously and groping with its hands. It was that terror of the streets, a drunken man.

The king stopped, with a frightened gasp, turned, and ran wildly in the opposite direction. The something at his shoulder had now become a laugh-with-hands.

Then, still furiously exercising the genius in his heels, the king came suddenly against a woman's skirt. It was a chance refuge, but he clung to it desperately. The woman, leaning down, peered into his face with startled eyes.

"Why," she said, in a choked whisper, "it's little Galahad!"

The king shook his head.

"It's me," he said. Then, tightening his grip upon the tawdry skirt, he added: "There was a drunken man— Please take me home with you!"

This to a bad woman, who put one hand to her breast and stared down at him—and stared down at him.

"Lord! If I only could! If I only dared! One night!" Then she straightened up and laughed, a hard, grim, little laugh that seemed to be turned daggerwise against her own heart. "I'll take you home to your mother," said the bad woman brusquely.

"I haven't any," said the king.

"Ah!" With a swift, half-frightened glance up and down the street, the bad woman bent over him. "You heard what they called me," she said, quite as if she had been talking to a grown-up. "Aren't you afraid of a bad woman?"

It was a delicate question; but, as between bad woman and a laugh-with-hands, the bad woman had all the better of it.

"I'm not afraid," said the king.

So they went quietly through the unmentionable byway, the king and the bad woman, his hand in hers. Once a man lurched out of the shadows, stared into the woman's face, and would have put his hand on her arm, but she thrust him aside with such a gesture of loathing that he reeled away. After that she kept her arm across her face and hurried, hurried, until the king's legs ached with the effort to keep up with her. They came to a certain door and turned in.

A sharp flight of stairs lifted underfoot, with a flimsy handrail to safeguard the guests of the night. It was precarious going, at best, but the king was too sleepy and tired and hungry—despite the ice-cream cone—to worry.

about this Stygian progress. He clung to the bad woman's hand, stumbling up through the dark.

Then he heard the click of a key in a lock. A dim oblong of light appeared, and through this they went very softly into a little room.

"Wait where you are until I find the gas jet," said the bad woman, in a whisper. Then, "You're not afraid, are you, Galahad?"

"I'm hungry," replied the king.

He heard her laugh very gently, and then a tiny fan of flame unfolded against the wall, brushing back the shadows and giving to a bad woman's room the betrayal of light. The king, glancing about, saw only a yellow bureau beside the shabby-curtained window, a rocking-chair, a small table, and a bed. An old and very sad carpet covered the floor. The wall held a cheap print or two. At the rear of the room hung a faded red curtain which, being half drawn aside, disclosed a small stove, a sink, and a few improvised shelves. Such was a bad woman's room.

Turning down the gas so that it burned without whining, the king's hostess put aside her hat and turned to her guest with a smile.

"What do you usually have for supper?" she asked.

"Ice cream," said the king, "and chocolate cake and—gumdrops."

It was the best he could do, offhand.

The bad woman did not seem in the least taken aback by this unusual selection.

"In that case," she said, "I'll have to run down to the corner. It's so hard to keep ice cream this warm weather. I often find I haven't a bit in the house. You won't be frightened if I leave you for a few moments, will you?"

"No," said the king. He would have dared more than solitude for ice cream and chocolate cake.

The bad woman drew the rocking-chair close to the window.

"You can sit here," she said, "and watch for me."

So the king sat in a bad woman's room, his good sword across his knees, and let his head rest comfortably against the back of the chair. And whatever ghosts peered out at him from the shadows drew back again, ashamed. For the guests of that room were not accustomed to sit with such a light on their hair, nor such a knightly sword across their knees.

The bad woman went directly to the pawnshop of Boris Maxman, broker of despair. The single light still flickered in the dark bowels of the shop, caricaturing the Jew against his own wall. He spread his hands, and the light painted the gesture large against the dim shelves. It might have been a scene in the inferno, at the end of the world, and this the final gesture of the conqueror.

"So," said the little shopkeeper, with a wry smile, "it iss de liddle diamond—at last."

A pawnbroker knows better than a priest just how desperate are the circumstances of his parishioners. He knows all the little intimate runs and flourishes of their lives—how they plunge this way and that to escape the nets that fate has drawn for them. He knows how poverty drives her game from hedge to hedge, from thicket to thicket. His mind is stocked with pitiful inventories of personal and household treasures. He knows the first sacrifice and the last. He knows when to-day's heirloom will be to-morrow's loaf; when this week's trinket will be next week's debauch. And so he knew about the bad woman's little diamond.

He knew that it represented her beggar's portion of happiness, that it stood for the few precious moments in her life. A bad woman's past is the world's property, privacy being strictly the re-



The caress, if such it may be called, was purely ecclesiastical. Yet it fetched a becoming color to Miss Philomena's cheek.

ward of virtue. Hence Boris Maxman knew that a man had once given her this ring—and no other; that he had bestowed upon her the conventional promissory diamond and never the ring of gold that keeps a woman safe from the edged tongues of respectability.

The bad woman smiled back across the dusty glass case, vaguely a-glitter with its wealth of unredeemed pledges.

"I only want a little," she said; "a few dollars—say ten—no, fifteen! Fifteen dollars for a ring worth a hundred! Is it a bargain?"

Without a word, the Jew opened his greasy wallet and laid the soiled green bills upon the counter. The ring fell, tinkling, upon the glass.

"It iss full of flaws," grumbled the Jew, as a matter of course. But he knew that he had got the best of the bargain.

The bad woman turned, with a quick, indrawn breath, and slipped quietly away.

Armed with her wealth, she invaded in turn a delicatessen shop and a small confectionery establishment. Then she fled back to her small guest, her purchases clutched to her breast.

On the threshold of the room, she paused, with tightening throat and blurring eyes. The king sat by the window, fast asleep, his head drooping forward and his cheek on his hand. The tin sword lay across his knees, gleaming

dully in the gaslight—and there was another light on his hair.

The bad woman went softly across the room and, dropping to her knees, placed one arm about his shoulders and kissed him.

"Look, Galahad!" she whispered. "See what I've brought you!"

The king, by a considerable effort, opened one eye and gazed at the bad woman's purchases. Then he struggled up, blinking, and, her cheek being near, he patted it, in sleepy gratitude.

"I think," said the king, "that you're a very *good* bad woman."

The very good bad woman got hastily to her feet, brushing at her eyes, and began to make ready for the feast.

"Come help me, Galahad," she said, "or you'll fall asleep again."

So the king, heavy with drowsiness, tumbled down from the chair, and together they arranged the table. She, meanwhile, had raided her modest larder of a cold chop and half a loaf of bread.

"I suppose we should begin with the bread and the chop," said the bad woman, doubtfully surveying the eccentric menu.

"I always begin with the ice cream," said the king, "because, if I didn't, I mightn't have room for it."

This argument being unanswerable, the king was forthwith provided with a spoon, and the banquet proceeded, wrong end to, but a tremendously successful banquet for all that. Indeed, we might all do well to eat our dinners backward now and then. It would give us something to be thankful for when we returned to the saner program of bread and meat first.

So the king ate of the sweets of this world, and the very good bad woman sat with a smile on her face and pretended to partake of the feast. But whether she tasted any sweet I cannot say.

And after the revolutionary repast

was concluded, the very good bad woman sat down in the chair by the window and took the king in her arms.

"Little hands that beat the pane—
Little whispers in the rain—
Baby, baby, is it you,
Peering in at me again?"

I cannot say how the bad woman came by this song, nor do I pretend that she sang it well. Her voice, indeed, wavered on the lines, and several times faltered into silence. But the king found it a very satisfactory song to go to sleep to.

His head dropped back against the pillowing shoulder. His eyelids closed. One hand unclasped itself from the hilt of the tin sword and, stealing up, fastened upon the cheap lace at the bad woman's breast. He did not waken when she undressed him, and so did not see her go softly to the yellow bureau and take therefrom a diminutive white nightdress, creased and wrinkled from long disuse.

Midnight found her kneeling by the bed, her arms about the white-clothed figure of the sleeping king, her cheek against his cheek.

CHAPTER XII.

"My dear Miss van Zandt, may I offer a suggestion?"

The unexpected fat bishop sat upon the extreme edge of one of Miss Philomena's library chairs, placed the tips of his fingers precisely together, and smiled benevolently upon his hostess. It was before breakfast of the second day of the conference. The other guests, because of the weakness of their flesh in the matter of early rising, were not yet down.

Under ordinary circumstances, the bishop would have confessed to a like weakness. But to-day he had risen at seven, having been prodded out of bed by the relentless nagging of a great idea. The bishop's ideas were contin-

ually bullying him about, and this one had been particularly tyrannical. Descending the stairs to the library, he had found Miss Philomena seated at her desk, arranging her program for the final session of the conference, which was to be held directly after breakfast. The bishop was leaving at noon for the West, and he earnestly desired to sow the seeds of his inspiration before departure.

At the bishop's question, Miss Philomena abandoned pencil and paper and turned to him with charming graciousness. She was wearing a rose-silk morning gown, which restored, in generous measure, her vanished youth. She looked her best—which she had planned to look.

"As many suggestions as you like, my dear bishop."

"I—ah—thank you! As you doubtless know," he continued modestly, "I have advocated for some time past a certain reform with regard to the overcrowding of large cities. Perhaps you have seen the volume of my printed sermons called 'Trippit on Exodus'?"

"I have read every word of it," said Miss Philomena, blushing slightly. She did not add that she had purchased the tome only yesterday, and had sat up half the night to finish it, with smelling salts and black coffee.

"Really?" cried the bishop, beaming upon her. "Then you already know my ideas upon the subject."

"You believe," she responded, in the tone of one who has crammed up for a quiz, "that the city should be moved out into the country."

"Hmm! Not precisely. And yet I dare say that would be a fair summary of the doctrine. Of course," continued the bishop, with a scholarly contraction of the brows, "my remedy applies only to the surplus population, by which I mean those persons who cannot afford to live *decently* in the city, the poor."

"Ah, the poor!" sighed Miss Philomena compassionately.

The bishop's plump countenance took on a sympathetic melancholy.

"As I understand your procedure," he went on, "it is the custom of the conference each year to adopt a resolution embodying its attitude upon current reforms. I believe this resolution is given to the press for publication throughout the country?"

"The press," said Miss Philomena, "is most generous."

Each year the conference, in solemn conclave assembled, pledged itself to some Utopian reform, such as more homes for wayward girls, suppression of crime films in motion-picture theaters, or free baths for the poor. Of course, these reforms were not always carried out; indeed, they usually got no farther than the newspapers. But, as Miss Philomena said, the main thing was to *advocate* them, and in that way arouse public opinion to a sense of its social responsibilities. Miss Philomena and her colleagues had come to regard this annual resolution almost as an amendment to Holy Writ, a view in which they were greatly encouraged by the attitude of the newspapers. Miss Philomena did not know that the newspapers would have printed her dinner menu, her love letters, her recipe for plum pudding, her favorite cure for sunburn, her views on Browning, her wedding notice, her divorce, her obituary, and her will, with the same avidity they displayed in the publication of the resolution signed by her name. Hence, to her mind, the resolution was a matter that—in all humility—the world could not do well without.

"I was about to suggest," said the bishop, "that you adopt for your resolution this year—subdivision four, chapter six, of 'Trippit on Exodus.' That section, you will remember, is devoted to the 'Relief of Cities.'"

"Splendid!" cried Miss Philomena.

It had dawned on her with startling suddenness that the adoption of the famous bishop's doctrines would be a brilliant coup. Not only would it lend added dignity to the resolution, but it would provide a certain halo of importance for her own head. She would show Doctor MacLean—the pagan!—that she was no mere charitable dabbler.

"If you have no objection, I shall present subdivision four to the conference at the morning session."

"My dear bishop," said Miss Philomena, giving him a daring sidelong glance, "I should be delighted to have you do so!"

Now from a young miss in her teens, Miss Philomena's fluttering sidelong glance might not have seemed in the slightest degree daring. But for a maiden lady with ideals to glance sidelong at a bishop is, in its very essence, bold.

"Dear lady!" said the fat bishop.

He leaned forward until the relation between him and his chair was perilously strained, and laid his hand upon Miss Philomena's slim fingers. The caress, if such it may be called, was purely ecclesiastical. Yet it fetched a becoming color to Miss Philomena's cheek, induced a certain hoarseness in the bishop's voice.

"Permit me," said the bishop, a trifle huskily, "to thank you."

Miss Philomena gently withdrew her fingers.

"I am grateful for the suggestion," she murmured.

"I regret, I deeply regret that I must leave so soon," mourned the bishop.

"Is there no later train?"

"Not until six, and that, I fear, is out of the question."

Miss Philomena bowed to the inexorable of the bishop's engagements in the West, and reached for the ancient bell pull.

"Let me order the brougham for you," she said.

"No, no!" protested the bishop.

But when Simms appeared in the doorway, he submitted passively to the arrangements made for his comfort. Indeed, the bishop was never one to scorn the joys of being made comfortable.

"Please telephone the garage, Simms, and tell Barker that I shall want the car this morning."

"Very good, ma'am. At what time, ma'am?"

"At what time?" asked Miss Philomena, turning to the bishop with that air of indecision which so becomes a woman.

"I—ah—— Shall we say eleven-thirty?"

"Eleven-thirty, sir? Very good, sir."

Simms departed with solemn tread. Once more the bishop leaned forward in his chair.

"I find myself at a loss," he said warmly, "to express to you my pleasure, my satisfaction, at having met so advanced a spirit——"

Miss Philomena inclined her head. Above all things, she desired to be thought advanced.

"I have found," the bishop continued, "a kindred soul, one who understands my work, one who understands—me! You, of all the hundreds—perhaps I should say the thousands—who have read 'Trippit on Exodus,' have discovered its true message. You wish to incorporate that message in your resolution! You place your standard beside mine! Hereafter, we shall be fellow soldiers in the battle against ignorance! We shall go forward toward the light, hand in hand——"

He permitted that somewhat amorous picture of himself and Miss Philomena, going hand in hand toward the light, to stand, to brighten, to dry into a golden frame of silence. Miss Philomena, scanning the portrait with fascinated inward vision, felt the temperature of her cheeks increase.

A maid entered and announced that the guests were down. Miss Philomena sighed and rose from her chair. The bishop also rose, and Miss Philomena, for no apparent reason, put out her hand. The bishop took it in his own, giving it a slight and eminently ecclesiastical pressure. Then, by common impulse, they both turned to the door—rather too hastily—and composed their countenances for the ordeal of the descending guests. But before them, still brightly traced, floated that rosy vision of themselves going hand in hand toward the light.

Probably no other house in New York that morning could have boasted such an array of virtuous excellence as was gathered about Miss Philomena's breakfast table. It represented many of the most important charities in the East—and several of the best families. The persons composing it were, with one exception, excruciatingly respectable, righteous by tradition, orthodox because comfortable, and extremely serious-minded. The one exception was Doctor Peter MacLean, who, though not a member of the conference, invariably was asked to attend its sessions. Ostensibly, he was present in his capacity as expert sociologist, but underlying this reason was Miss Philomena's desire to show him that she was an important person, after all.

He sat now at the foot of the table, consuming toast and hot water, his massive head bent forward over his plate, one sandy eyebrow slightly cocked above the other, the picture of sardonic and stony middle age. There was but one known weakness in the doctor's character, and that was an overweening fondness for children. He often said that the only people he took seriously were those under twelve years of age. Hence it was almost inevitable that he should glance suddenly at his hostess and say:

"Where's that boy of yours, Philo-

mena? I declare, I haven't seen him since I arrived! Last year he almost put my eye out with a popgun. I miss him."

Miss Philomena gave a guilty start. In the excitement of the bishop's arrival, in the rush of charitable business, she had utterly forgotten her lesser charity. She had intended to telephone the Holland House the night before, but somehow—there had been so much on her mind—

"He's spending a few days with his governess," she said, striving to speak casually, though her conscience pricked. "As a sort of a lark, you know."

"Too bad, too bad!" growled the doctor, in his great, rumbling voice. "He was worth talking to, that boy. I'm disappointed."

He glanced about the table to see who else was disappointed, but the others continued stolidly to pursue their material wants. They were not disappointed in the least.

"How old—ah—is the boy?"

The plump bishop was gazing directly at Miss Philomena, a distinctly shocked expression upon his cherubic countenance. He had always understood that Miss Philomena was a maiden lady of no immediate family.

"He's just eight," said Miss Philomena, with some confusion. "A most difficult age."

"And a most interesting one," boomed the doctor. He addressed himself to the bishop. "Miss van Zandt hauled the little beggar out of the public pound when he was a baby. I've always considered that a splendid thing—to take a child out of the gutter and give him a chance. You can't beat that, sir!"

"The rescue of a single child," said the Reverend Doctor Ramie, of Boston, "is, *per se*, of negligible value. It is, if Miss van Zandt will pardon me, a pleasing sentimentality, not to be compared with the larger service of uplifting mankind."

"I myself have always thought," said Miss Philomena, "that one's chief duty was to the millions, and not to the individual."

"Stuff and nonsense!" roared the shocking doctor. "It's the individual that counts, and you know it, or you're no Christians. I'd be ashamed—if I professed to be a follower of your Christ—to lump my fellow men together like a shipment of hogs, spiritual value so much per thousand! It's sheer laziness!"

With a haste that betrayed her agitation, Miss Philomena rose from the table, thereby bringing to a close both the discussion and the breakfast. But as the guests passed into the library, to await the arrival of the less important delegates, the doctor dropped back to his hostess' side.

"Philomena," said he, "I apologize. Ideals at breakfast are inexcusable."

Miss Philomena regarded him with the faint bewilderment that he always aroused in her. She had intended to lecture him, but all that she said was:

"You spoiled my breakfast."

CHAPTER XIII.

The president closed her lorgnette and leaned forward a trifle, the tips of her fingers just touching the table before her.

"We now come," said Miss Philomena, "to the adoption of the annual resolution. This, of course, is the most important part of our program. I think," she continued gravely, "that we should adopt, this year, a totally *new* idea—one that is thoroughly advanced. Suggestions are now in order."

As Miss Philomena concluded, her eye fell, as if by chance, upon the plump bishop. A fleeting look passed between them. The bishop rose, fumbling at the breast of his coat.

"Bishop Trippit," said Miss Philomena, and seated herself with dignity.

The bishop bowed as low as nature would permit, then addressed himself impartially to all. In his hands he held a folded paper, upon which the eyes of the conference were fixed with fascinated discomfort.

"Madam President and delegates to the conference, I take—ah—the liberty of offering you a resolution embracing the subject upon which I touched at yesterday's meeting. I have already prepared—ah—a tentative paper which, if there are no objections, I will read."

"There are no objections," said the president, rather hastily.

The bishop slowly unfolded the paper, donned a pair of massive eyeglasses, and, after some preliminary throat clearing, began to read. The conference promptly sank into that differential coma which is the common state of the laity when listening to the clergy; all, that is, except the shocking doctor, who drew out notebook and pencil and jotted down certain heresies.

"Whereas," continued the bishop sonorously, "it is the sacred duty of those in authority to smite the waters of ignorance with the rod of enlightenment, to roll back the seas of social darkness, and to deliver the children of oppression out of their bondage, therefore be it

"Resolved, That this conference of United Charities take up the rod of Aaron and of Moses; that it devote itself throughout the coming year to the advocacy of the modern exodus; and that it strive to lead the poor of great cities from the Egypt of the slums to the open country—ah—of the promised land."

A somewhat bewildered, but quite hearty, burst of applause greeted the bishop's thunderous closing sentence. Then the conference became painfully aware of the doctor standing at his end of the row, his arms folded across his chest.

"Philomena," said he, flinging parlia-

mentary courtesies to the four winds, "I'd like to offer a resolution of my own."

The president gazed helplessly at that great rock of a man, then lowered her eyes.

"Doctor MacLean," she murmured.

The doctor drew out his notebook. Holding this between thumb and forefinger, he faced the bishop.

"I've never before preached to a bishop," rumbled the doctor, "so I approach my subject with due humility. The bishop has suggested that we pick up the slums and carry them bodily into the country." He shot a quizzical glance at Miss Philomena. "Advanced ideas—bah! It's an old cure for an older malady, and it won't work."

The bishop looked at his towering adversary, puffed out his cheeks, sucked them in again, crossed his plump legs, uncrossed his plump legs, and said nothing.

"It won't work," the doctor went on, "because it doesn't go to the root of the trouble. We need cities to operate our civilization. They're here to stay. You can't quit them, any more than a snail can quit its shell. What we must do is make the city worthy of the life it shelters. To do that, we must put windows in blank walls, and let in the sun. We must rake over filth, and plant flowers, instead. We must abolish the wage slavery of its laborers, and give each man a just interest in his enterprise, as the farmer's tenant is given an interest in his land. We must regulate its progress so that there will be space for playing, and we must, at all costs, keep a garden in the heart of the city, in order that our children may know the beauty of the world as it was in the beginning. The bishop has said that the city should be moved into the country. I offer the following thought in-

stead: Resolved, That the country be brought to the city." And the tall doctor sat down.

There was an embarrassing silence. All eyes were turned to the unhappy president. How would she handle the situation? Would she give her approval to the bishop's poetical and romantic project of an exodus, or would she declare for the shocking doctor? By the expression of her countenance she would do neither.

"Are there—any—further suggestions?" asked the president weakly.

Obviously there were no further suggestions. The silence deepened. At his end of the row, the plump bishop sat stiffly, gazing at the ceiling. The doctor glared rudely at them all, a grim smile warping his lips.

But there is a man for every great crisis, and for this there was the Reverend Doctor Ramie, of Boston. He rose.

"I move," said he, peering over the tops of his spectacles, "that both resolutions be submitted to the president for her mature consideration, and that she decide for the conference which shall be declared adopted. Furthermore, I move that her decision be published in the press a month from this date, such decision to receive the unanimous approval of the United Charities."

"Second the motion," cried two voices in unison.

Miss Philomena looked distractedly at the conference.

"All in favor——" she ruled faintly.

"Aye!" said the conference, in a tone of intense relief.

Miss Philomena, feeling like the grain between the upper and nether millstones, distinctly sighed.

"General business," she said, "is now in order."

TRUTH AND ILLUSIONS

By William H. Hamby

AN illusion may contain the soul of truth; a mountain chain of facts be false and deceptive as a mirage.

For ages men have sung the praises of truth—and shunned it. They have bowed the knee to it—and hated it. Meet a man and say: "I am going to tell you the truth," and he flinches. A speaker announces that he will tell the truth, and everybody expects to hear his neighbor excoriated. Start on a crusade of truth-telling, and you will be as popular as a chronic borrower or a theatrical-ticket broker.

This is not the fault of truth, for truth is as exhilarating as good wine and as sweet as honey in the comb. Neither is it the fault of mankind, who, from the first beacon fire on the hills, has sought truth.

The trouble is truth has too often fallen into the hands of unlovely friends. It has been appropriated by castigators, caustics, infidels, and dogmatists. They have tried to put it into fixed codes, like religion and law and morals, to make cold straitjackets of it into which warm human life is forced.

No wonder that when some one says to a man, "I'm going to tell you the truth," he shrinks, expecting to have the rod laid upon his faults or some illusion that he loves torn away, leaving him bare and bleeding.

These disciples of truth misrepresent it in their zeal. They are literalists who are forever missing the spirit of things in their worship of its material husk. They set up an idol of cold, dead, material facts and worship it as the god of truth, and want to burn at the stake all who do not so worship.

Mankind really loves the truth, but does not know it. The thing represented to them as the truth is so often not the truth at all, but mere hard, material facts that may be only partly true, or even entirely false.

"Carson is a warm-hearted fellow," you say.

The advocate of the "plain, unvarnished truth" shakes his head and taps you with his finger.

"Let me tell you the truth about Carson—he is a thief. Three years ago, he was caught stealing coal."

Is the fact that he stole coal any more the truth about Carson than that he wrapped a sick child, whom he never saw before, in his own coat and shivered all night?

You see, the truth about Carson—about you and me—is not any one of a hundred facts that might be told about us; it is the essence of our spirit. Your acts may be good, bad, or innocuous; but not until I know your emotions, your aspirations, your inner standards, do I know the truth about you.

Truth is a spirit, and not a set of figures or a catalogue of facts. It is as fluctuating and changeable as the clouds. It is changeless only in one thing—its final essence. It is born into a million different forms with every sunrise, and changes as the light on the fields, the bubbles on the water.

And illusions are a part of it, and daydreams are a part of it, and faith and love are a part of it. The man who cherishes the illusion that all men are good is nearer the truth than the one who sternly declares that he has looked at things as they are and finds all men bad. The girl who sees life as a stretch of starlight sky, as a field of golden sunlight, as an orchard in bloom, an ecstatic bird on the limb, has more of the truth than the one who says she has seen it all and finds life only a dull, sordid battle for bread among driving brutes, a grim monotony of work and a little sleep.

It is folly to cherish illusions that lead one into a pit. It is foolish deliberately to blind oneself to any reality. But it is far more foolish to let one reality blindfold one to all other realities; and more harmful still to tear away the illusions that are but the colorful garments of life.

For illusions are not all illusion. Fact worshipers are inclined to dump all products of the mind into one great basket marked "illusions." Any flowers from the garden of fancy to them must be artificial, all warmth from heart dreams but phosphorescence.

But it is not so. Many, many illusions are truth. And these very illusions and daydreams and heart cravings are evidence of a deep-rooted love in the human breast for truth—the ultimate, longed-for truth, the real spirit of truth, which is something more than meat and raiment, something beyond the sordid day's grind—a warmth and color and lightness and joy of life.

A Diamond Solitaire

By Mary Hedges Fisher

Author of "Youth Takes Its Turn," "Food and Florinda," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY H. F. NONNAMAKER

The part played by a ten-cent diamond in a charming little office romance.

WHEN young Mr. Burdick emerged from the president's office that Saturday morning, after an interview that had lasted full three-quarters of an hour—so his assistant, Miss Ramsey, calculated by consulting her wrist watch—he looked brighter and more like his old self than he had since his reappearance a month previous, wearing a new black band on his sleeve. Strictly speaking, it was not within the scope of Miss Ramsey's employment to keep account of the office manager's goings-out and comings-in; but, without seeming to notice anything, the young lady always managed to know just about where on the premises he could be found.

To-day, instead of resuming his place at his desk, he passed it by and came over to hers. She wrote on very busily, and looked up, with a start, when he spoke her name.

"Miss Ramsey"—in lowered tones, with due regard for the proximity of his stenographer, little Miss Conway, whose keen ears were proverbial—"could you arrange to lunch with me this noon?"

With the unexpectedness of the invitation, Katherine Ramsey let fall a big blot of ink on the page. She wanted to go dreadfully, and for an instant she wavered. Then—

"I'm so sorry," she said, meeting his gray eyes frankly. "But the girls are giving an engagement party in the lunch room to-day, and I promised Miss Engel to be there."

He hesitated, as if questioning the sincerity of her excuse, and was about to say more when the inopportune arrival of an office boy, saying that Mr. Sinclair wished to see Miss Ramsey immediately, put an end to a conversation Katherine would have been nothing loath to continue.

Feeling like a bad little schoolgirl summoned without warning to the presence of her principal, Katherine Ramsey presented herself in the luxurious offices of the president. Mr. Sinclair, who had been standing by the broad window looking out on William Street, whirled about at her entrance, his face lighting up so pleasantly that the young woman's heart subsided with a thump. Clearly she was not to be scolded this time.

"Sit down, Miss Ramsey," and a mahogany armchair was placed for her.

She obeyed, and a moment of silence followed, while the august gentleman subjected her to a scrutiny so searching that she began to feel nervous. She could not know that his reflections were all along the line of wonder that so competent a brain could exist in conjunction with her slight, almost childish, physique.

"Miss Ramsey," he began, tilting his swivel chair back so far that it creaked, "I've got a business proposition to make you. But first—you mustn't be offended—I'm going to ask you a very personal question. Are you engaged to be married?"

Katherine Ramsey shook her sleek little dark head.

"No, sir," she said.

"Likely to be?" he persisted somewhat jovially. "Got a beau?"

In all her twenty-three years, Katherine Ramsey had never told a lie.

"No," she said, surprised to find that the confession hurt—just a trifle. Then she added, smiling, "My sisters take all the beaux who come around our house. I guess I was meant to keep on being the ugly duckling."

"Well," said the president, becoming serious, "we're now in a position to talk business. Please don't let this information get around for the present. Mr. Burdick, under whom you have been acting, has been promoted, and that leaves vacant the place of office manager. There has been some discussion among the board of directors as to who should fill it. There are several young men about the establishment who could qualify for the job. But there is no doubt of your being Mr. Burdick's natural, logical successor, so far as competency goes. There's this one objection—would you stick?"

Katherine's straight little back stiffened.

"Why shouldn't I stick?"

"My dear young lady, women in business are uncertain quantities."

Katherine's black eyes flashed fire, for all their mildness.

"Oh," she said, with a note of immeasurable scorn, "if you—and the others—are afraid I'll be running off to get married just when you've grown to count on me, you can tell them not to worry. I haven't the faintest intention of getting married. My ambition is to stay in business and climb to the top, just as if I had been born the boy my parents wanted."

"That's the talk!" nodded Mr. Sinclair approvingly. "If more girls had your spirit, there wouldn't be so much talk about the minimum wage. Now, as

for this position of office manager, you're young for the post, but you know the duties, the pitfalls, and I haven't the faintest doubt in the world that you'll make good. Your salary, to start, will be a fifty-per-cent increase on your present one, and advancement depends entirely on yourself. Stick by Sinclair & Co., and we'll stick by you. It's your kind of girl—the young college-bred woman who looks upon business as her life work, not merely as a stop-gap between the schoolroom and matrimony—who is going to revolutionize woman's place in the working world. Now," he ended, rummaging among some papers in a wire basket, "here is the two years' contract we shall expect you to sign."

Katherine reached an eager hand for the printed form.

"There," explained Mr. Sinclair, pointing with a lean forefinger, "is the clause many young women would balk at."

Miss Ramsey's lip curled.

"I'll sign it now."

"No. I don't want you to sign now. Think it over. Give yourself a week's time."

The feet of the prospective office manager trod sedately enough down the corridor, but beneath the blue serge dress her heart danced riotously. She wished she were not pledged to secrecy; she wanted to see Mr. Burdick; to congratulate him on his promotion and surprise him with the news that she had been named his successor. She was just in the mood for another of those rare, wonderful talks they had had together, when they had strap-hung all the way to Harlem and discussed at the top of their lungs, above the roar of the subway train, timely topics such as books they were reading, the value of the higher education, and the possibility of a permanent peace with national disarmament.

Upstairs in the women's lunch room,

a crowd of hilarious, hungry girls awaited her. It was a custom with Sinclair & Co., whenever there occurred a defection in the ranks due to the call of Cupid—and with forty-odd young women employees, such defections were not infrequent—to give her a royal “send-off” by a feast in the lunch room, to which all were bidden, all invited to contribute. To-day the party was in honor of Rosa Rappallo, a sweet little seventeen-year-old Italian in the filing department.

“Oh, you Katherine!” sang out the vociferous voice of Miss Engel, mistress of ceremonies, as Miss Ramsey appeared on the threshold. “Here—I’ve been holding a place for you,” indicating the chair on her left.

Suppressing the desire to sit anywhere else than where Miss Engel wanted her to, Miss Ramsey did as she was told.

Marguerite Engel, the president’s secretary, was acknowledged social arbiter among the Sinclair girls. The daughter of a German saloon keeper, educated in New York’s public schools, and finished off by a course in a much-advertised business college, Marguerite had gone to work at fifteen. Her rise had been rapid; she was an excellent speller and grammarian, and, as a ste-



“Are you engaged to be married?” Katherine Ramsey shook her sleek little dark head. “No, sir,” she said.

nographer, desirably devoid of nerves. Now, at twenty years old, she had reached the summit of her ambitions until such time as she should select some one of her many clamorous suiters upon whom to confer her hand. And, indeed, she was a superb young creature, with her big blue eyes, luscious complexion, and the marvelous cloud of golden hair that was the envy of the girls every time she let it down. Every cent of her salary went into the purchase of clothes that were not only “up



"Who's got the ring? You, Miss Ramsey? My word! Say, girls! Miss Ramsey, here, has got the ring!"

to the minute," but a yard or two beyond. She had no misgivings as to her own supreme worth, and in the face of such colossal egotism, Katherine Ramsey paled in her own estimation and could see herself only as the condescending Marguerite saw her—a insignificant, dowdy little old maid.

"Dudley's feeling pretty fine this morning," observed the mistress of ceremonies to her left-hand neighbor.

"Dudley? You mean Mr. Burdick?"

"Oh, you know whom I mean, all right!" returned Miss Engel, with a wink. Then, mindful of her duties, she clinked her tumbler, as a signal that the party was ready to begin.

After all had eaten their fill of cold tongue and potato salad, the mistress of ceremonies rapped for order and proposed a toast to the bride, for which event each girl present had been jealously harboring her glass of grape juice. It was drunk standing; and then, kindly encouraged by Miss Engel at her elbow, the bride elect arose, cheeks flushed with excitement, to express her thanks in pretty, halting English.

"You are all so good to me!" she said. "I feel sad that I am going to leave my good friends. But when the heart speaks, one can but follow. They tell me that wonderful cake is for me to cut, and that it has in it a ring that will fall to her whose turn comes next. I wish there might be a ring for each one of you—so that to you all might come very soon a sweetheart like my Antonio."

She sat down amid a burst of hand-clapping; and the silver cake knife, the traditional gift of the Sinclair girls on these occasions, was placed in her hand. The huge frosted cake was cut and passed down the length of the table. Straightway every girl commenced to search for the possible hidden prize. The beautiful mistress of ceremonies was obviously chagrined that in her portion came to light the thimble signi-

fying old-maidenhood, though she rallied instantly with a nonchalant "I should worry!" Then, "Say, who's got the ring? You, Miss Ramsey? My word! Say, girls! Miss Ramsey, here, has got the ring!"

"Put it on!" cried somebody. "Hold it up! We all want to see!"

"Not a bad-looking sparkler for the 'five-and-ten,'" said Miss Engel, with an approving nod at Miss Callahan, who had been appointed a committee of one to make the necessary purchases. "Now, ladies—come to order, please! We thank you for your attendance on this festal occasion. In the near future—as soon as Miss Ramsey divulges the name of the happy man—you will be summoned to a similar function. Now, in conclusion, we'll rise and give three rousing cheers for Rosa and Antonio!"

Then the affair was over, and the somewhat tearful bride elect, smothered in kisses and laden with spoils—the floral decorations from the table and what was left of the candy—took her departure, proudly escorted by two other little Italian girls who lived in Bleecker Street.

The mistress of ceremonies detained Katherine while sundry instructions were given to the janitress, and then, arm in arm, propelled her toward the elevator. Katherine did not feel so intimate with Marguerite as Marguerite did with Katherine; but what could she do about it, without appearing rude? When they emerged at the third floor, they ran squarely into Dudley Burdick. Retaining her affectionate hold upon her companion, Miss Engel blocked the young man's path.

"Hello, Mr. Burdick!" she said familiarly, while the young man removed his derby hat with the black band. "Look at this!" and pouncing upon Miss Ramsey's left hand, she held it aloft to display the cheap rhinestone ring. "She's next!"

But before the young man vouch-

safed any comment, another descending elevator carried him off. Miss Ramsey, so annoyed she could hardly keep her temper, turned on her heel and walked down the corridor.

Miss Engel giggled.

"Don't be so stuffy, Kitty, dear!" she called after the retreating figure. "Say—are you going home subway or el?"

Without deigning a reply, Katherine vanished into the inner office and opened her desk. There was no hope that Marguerite would stay squelched, more was the pity; by Monday morning she would be as serene as ever. Yet whereas Miss Ramsey's apparent terms of intimacy with the ill-bred stenographer was a matter any other woman would understand, Katherine could hardly expect Dudley Burdick to see why his assistant need promenade the halls in close communion with the flamboyant Marguerite, tolerating that young lady's cheap brand of humor about brass engagement rings and the like. Perhaps, if the invitation to luncheon were repeated on Monday, an explanation might be afforded.

But on Monday Mr. Burdick volunteered not a word to Miss Ramsey, save in ordinary matters of routine; nor on Tuesday or Wednesday. By that time, she had decided that if Mr. Burdick could be cool, Miss Ramsey could be cooler. By Thursday, the conversation between the office manager and his assistant had been cut down to monosyllables. The more Katherine assured herself she didn't care what Mr. Burdick thought of her, the more space that young gentleman seemed to occupy upon her horizon. That night in the Harlem apartment, the two pretty sisters who preempted all the beaux declared that Katherine was too cross to live with.

"I'm afraid you're overworking, my child," lamented her mother.

"Well, I'm likely to keep on!"

snapped Katherine, quitting the dinner table.

She lay down on the couch in the living room, without switching on the light. Oh, dear! How—uncomprehending—families were! Even her mother took it as a dispensation pre-ordained that to the younger daughters belonged all the brightness, all the sugarplums, of life, while to the lot of the eldest born, simply because she had aspired to a college education, fell nothing but the chance to become "a successful business woman."

The next morning Katherine heard the unsubstantiated rumor that Mr. Burdick had been transferred to the Chicago office. Perhaps it was just as well. In that event, she would not have to meet him face to face every day, with his detached, impersonal air.

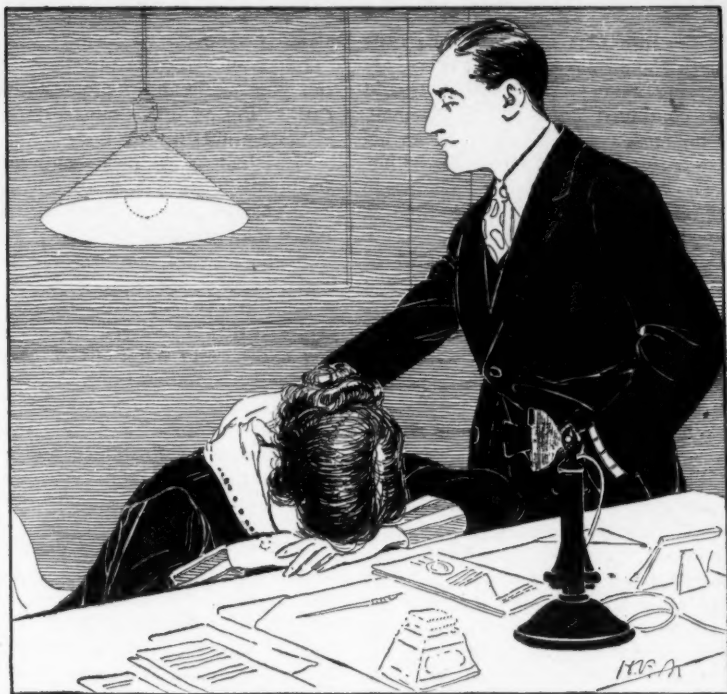
Katherine worked late that evening. It was close on to six o'clock when, all alone in the big office, she drew out the contract form, and, by the light of the green-shaded electric bulb over her desk, committed herself, with a stroke of the pen, to the service of Sinclair & Co. for "two years from date." She refolded the paper neatly and inclosed it in a long envelope; then, her head pillowed in her arms, her body shook in a paroxysm of strangling sobs. She was utterly and completely miserable, and nobody cared. And, to crown it all, on Monday morning the whole office staff would be congratulating her upon her grand good fortune. Little they knew!

"Why, what's the matter?" broke in somebody.

Katherine hastily raised a tear-stained visage, and, gulping back a sob, groped about for the handkerchief that seemed to have disappeared.

"Here, take mine!" and a fresh square of white linen, with a big "B" in the corner, met with grateful acceptance.

Dudley Burdick reclined against his



"Why, what's the matter?" broke in somebody.

assistant's desk in a manner that seemed to indicate his desire to get to the bottom of her distress.

"What's the matter?" he demanded.

"I—don't know."

"You—don't know! What's the matter, child?"

"Nothing, I guess."

"Now, that's all nonsense. A little girl like you shouldn't be crying all alone in the dark—for nothing. You've got to tell me. I might be able to help!"

Katherine began to laugh. Despite his air of bullying bravado, he looked so big and helpless—and so very much distressed! And, indeed, for the moment, it seemed that so long as he was there, acting as if he cared for her troubles—as, of course, he didn't *really*

—there wasn't anything in the world worth crying about.

"It's nothing, truly," she said. "Except I guess I'm tired."

The young man gave her a searching look, as if skeptical of this being the true explanation. There was a moment's awkward silence.

"I came back to the office to-night," he remarked, "on purpose to see if you were here—and to say good-by."

"Good-by?" she stammered.

"Yes. The cat's out of the bag now. Mr. Sinclair decided to-day that he wanted me to start the work in Chicago on Monday, and I'm leaving on the midnight express. But I couldn't go off—without wishing you luck—and—and all the happiness in the world."

It was extraordinary in retrospect that the utterance of this simple little remark should have set the young lady to crying again; and that she should have continued until the young man, for no reason whatsoever, sank to his knees beside her chair and gathered her in his arms, whispering, "Darling!" over and over. Yet at the time it seemed perfectly natural.

Dudley Burdick raised his head at last—it had been resting close to hers—and gave an uncomfortable laugh.

"This is darned unfair to the other fellow, I'm thinking!"

"What fellow?" her lips repeated dreamily.

"What fellow? Why, the man whose ring you wear!"

"What man? What ring?"

Dudley Burdick's eyes met hers in unflinching gaze.

"Have you forgotten so soon," he said dryly, "your engagement party last Saturday—and the diamond solitaire?"

"Oh-h!" gasped Katherine, in the light of comprehension.

Then, from a corner in her top drawer, she pulled out the bauble. His fingers seized on it eagerly, and beneath the pitiless glare of the drop-light, the ring showed up for the hollow mockery it was.

And because he was going away so soon, and every moment was precious, they talked everything out; and because confession was good for the soul, they admitted that they had loved each other—always.

"But I couldn't tell you," he said, "because—well, I wasn't free. My mother— You understand! But now—in a short while—the way has been made plain—and in six weeks,

or two months at the latest— How about it, dear?"

After an agreeable interlude, "What can you see in me?" mourned Katherine. "I'm so little—and scrawny!"

"You graceful little fairy!"

"My hair is so dark—and straight and——"

"I never could stand a frizzy blonde—like that Engel girl."

"Dudley, dear! But my mouth is so big!"

"Oh, you've got the sweetest smile in the world! Don't you know, darling, you excel every other girl I ever met by about ten million miles?"

Some time later, it occurred to Katherine to telephone her family that she was detained at the office and would not be home for dinner.

"We'll have our first meal together," said Dudley, as she hung up the receiver. "Why, what's that you're tearing up?"

"Only the chance of a lifetime," retorted Mr. Sinclair's model young business woman. "There goes a two years' contract with the company."

But her young man refused to feel dismayed.

"That's just as well, seeing you've got one for life—with me!"

As he spoke, he stepped toward the window, raising the sash. There was a quick turn of his wrist, a gleam of something bright and shining that shot from his hand into impenetrable depths below. When he turned, it was with an expression sheepish, but triumphant.

"That ring has gone where it won't bother you and me any more. The one I'll get for you won't have so big a stone, perhaps, but at least it'll have a real diamond."



The Magnum Opus

By Anne O'Hagan

Author of "Salome," "The Stabilizer," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. C. CASWELL

Which is greater—an artist's genius and capacity for work, or his capacity for life itself lived joyously and generously? Read this unusual story and tell us if you don't agree with Madge Rathburn's final conclusion.

IN Adriana Dorsey's garden, looking westward into an opening in the mountains, is the fountain that Kinsale made in the day of his promise. That was fifteen years ago. Adriana was thirty then, and Kinsale twenty; and the idea that she could have in him an interest more poignant than that of a wealthy woman with a harmless penchant toward art patronage never dawned upon any of us. But it was fifteen years ago, and Adriana still walks her garden paths alone save for the chill companioning of guests. And some of us have come unexpectedly upon her at the fountain's rim, in the sunset—a tall, gracious figure of a woman, with a fine, worn, sad face. I wonder! Still it was not to speculate on Adriana that I began the tale.

That fountain, which won for Kinsale the Addington prize—a hundred dollars—that fountain won for him also Madge Rathburn's promise to marry him. Madge adored genius, and all of us agreed that Kinsale's treatment of the fountain denoted genius. Even Murger admitted it, and as Murger had put a fountain of his own into the competition, and as he was quite obviously in love with Madge, unprejudiced testimony could scarce go further.

Some time, if you are in the New Hampshire region, a little east and a little south of the high peaks, make a pilgrimage to Adriana's place and look

at the garden. Many people do it who have never heard of Kinsale. For every one has heard of Miss Dorsey, whose people made millions in powder, and who spends her share of those millions in mild, futile attempts to live in a world of beauty. It is the gardens that make the marvel of her estate in New Hampshire. The house itself, built of native granite, is an unpretentious structure, as such things go—broad, well proportioned, many-chimneyed; but, though it has thirty guest rooms, and though the number of its baths is beyond computing, and though the great hall is hung with faded blue-and-gold tapestries from a French palace, it is not the house that makes the fame of the place. It is the terraced gardens, leading down, tier by tier, to the fountain, and up on the other side to the primeval woods; and it is the view, straight between purple-rising hills into the sunset burning over Lambeth Notch.

I do not know that the conception of Kinsale's fountain was overwhelmingly original. But all the critics, in the year when it won old Rupert Addington's prize for the best piece of work by a sculptor under twenty-five, agreed that he was original in his handling of the theme. There is a delicate playfulness about the work, a sort of joyfulness, of airy mischief, that makes it impossible for one to look at the thing



Some of us have come unexpectedly upon her at the fountain's rim, in the sunset—a tall, gracious figure of a woman, with a fine, worn, sad face.

without a bubbling of happy laughter. The proportions are harmonious, exquisite. Springing upright from the rim of the inner bowl are little naked loves, their bodies deliciously curved. Each one holds to his right ear a conch shell, and each is listening to the roar therein with that look which children wear when they first hear that long-held, mysterious, imprisoned music of the sea.

that fountain; he won also Madge Rathburn. Whatever happened to him of disillusionment and loss in later time, I don't suppose that any young man ever had a happier winter than he had that year. To be twenty is in itself almost enough of bliss; but to be twenty and in love, twenty and beloved, to be twenty and to hold in one's fancy exquisite conceptions of form and in one's fingers the

When the fountain plays, it is from each of these shells that the silvery spray rises and falls in a gleaming shower. The outer basin is decorated in low relief with other little naked loves, multitudinously active about all the things that occupy children at the seashore—dragging cargoes of seaweed, building fortifications of sand, examining starfish, falling down before the force of sportive billows. It is a charming thing, and Adriana has always held that it is the chief pride of that famous, mountain-looking garden of hers.

As I have said, Kinsale won not only the Addington prize with

power to give them reality—it was almost too much. To have had it for a few months or a year—it was a year before Madge broke the engagement—means that a man has had almost his share of terrestrial bliss. Perhaps one need not be sorry for Kinsale, after all.

Madge was one of the little colony that dwelt in the Alley. She and Jessica Garland had a studio in one of the disused stables that have sheltered so long a line of artists in the days of their obscurity. Jessica did illustrations for the "home page" of the *Evening Chronicle*, but Madge had no other connection with art than her association gave her. She taught something—English or algebra or economics—in an up-town finishing school; but, having been a classmate of Jessica's in college, and having always had a reverential regard for art, she acceded joyously when the young illustrator asked her to come down from a colorless boarding house in the Seventies and do camp-studio housekeeping in the Alley.

Kinsale's remodeled stable was directly across the roadway from the one occupied by the two girls. His first meeting with Madge occurred one December evening, when his privacy was invaded by a young woman who somewhat indignantly demanded if he had feloniously taken possession of a steak not designed for his consumption, "as the butcher said," and so forth.

Kinsale investigated, and found that a steak did indeed repose in his ice box, but cleared himself of nefarious intention by setting forth that his supplies were ordered, as well as prepared, by Madame Guyot, who hobbled into his place each morning about ten o'clock and "did" for him and Hobson next door, intermittently, all day.

Madge accepted the explanation and the steak, and looked with large, earnest, fascinated eyes at the plaster figures looming in the dusky corners of the studio. And somehow, discovering

that Madame Guyot had taken her departure that particular evening just in season to be ignorant that Kinsale's dinner engagement had fallen through at the last moment, she ventured greatly and asked him to cross the street and eat steak with her and Jessica.

Madge was a year or two older than Kinsale, and for a while she affected to treat him from a vantage ground of seniority. But the affection of the thing was palpable from the beginning. Kinsale had knocked about the world all his life, which made twenty years of experience to Madge's two or three. He had been poor, and he had been modestly rich; he had sold newspapers, and he had lived in grand hotels on the Riviera; he had been hungry, and he had had tutors. His father—Kinsale's mother had died in giving him birth—had been, in short, a gambler, a soldier of fortune. Five years before Kinsale won the Addington prize, the elder gentleman had followed his wife out of the world of pleasing changes and chances, and had left Walter to shift for himself. And Walter had shifted, with varying fortunes.

It was while he had been posing for old Albrecht for one of the figures in the giant frieze of "Labor" for the Commerce Building, in Washington, that he had had his first encounter with plastic art. He had hung around Albrecht's studio after the posing had been finished, receiving a little casually thrown instruction; but, more important, being encouraged to do what he pleased. He had been fascinated by the discovery of a gift in himself—fascinated, but not rendered overwhelmingly earnest. Perhaps the haphazard life he had led for eighteen years had not been a good training in concentration and earnestness. And then, suddenly, goldenly, had come the little legacy from his mother's sister, and he had been free to do what he pleased—

so long as he pleased nothing more costly than eight hundred dollars a year could compass.

The Alley, which is a pleasantly gossip neighborhood, was aware that Kinsale was in love with Madge before either of the principals in the affair. The Alley had an eye for the suitabilities, and it enthusiastically declared that nothing could be more suitable. Madge had no pretensions toward an artistic career—perfect! An artist, said the Alley, should never, never marry an artist. Madge, however, adored genius; again perfect! For genius needed adoration; a genius in marriage needed a partner with adoration's infinite capacity for forgiveness, for self-abnegation. And Madge was settled, domestic, earnest—exactly what Kinsale, unsettled, undomestic, too casual by long training or lack of training, needed to balance him. They were foreordained for each other, and if they did not soon perceive it and take appropriate action upon it, then the Alley would do something about it itself. More especially as Murger seemed likely to plunge in and damage the pleasing obviousness of the combination.

Murger was somewhat older than the other two, although he was still young enough to enter the Addington competition. But he had a settled way with him. He had his life all marked out. He meant to produce a great sculpture by the time he was thirty; he meant to marry the year after; he meant to spend two years on the Western plains, doing something very distinctively American to his art; and then two in Rome, letting Michelangelo, so to speak, revise his Americanism. It was all quite systematically planned, and no one could have been more irritated than he was by the discovery that his feeling for Madge was likely to interfere with his schedule. It began to seem to him that, in the

interests of work itself, he would have to make a readjustment of his scheme. He would have to marry at twenty-four, in order to get the thing over and done with and to be free for work forever after.

Afterward it seemed to him that he might have won the fountain competition had he been married to Madge, and thus comfortably rid of her. As it was, she had kept obtruding between him and every conception he could form for his fountain. He began to see her as the eternal mother figure for statues that no one had shown any desire to have him model; she was Aspiration and Hope and Despair in countless symbolic groups that he was not called upon to execute. His fountain suffered. He was almost more annoyed with Madge than he was in love with her. For with Murger it was literally true that his work had first rank in his life.

When, on the very day after the announcement of the Addington prize, the Alley was treated to the information that Madge and Kinsale were engaged, Murger sat alone in his locked studio for an hour and had it out with himself. He told himself that he had never counted upon such a thing as this—that it was outrageous! *He* wanted the girl, and he had always had what he wanted, because he had always known how to go about getting his modest desires. But he wanted her—and Kinsale was to have her! Kinsale, who was here to-day and gone to-morrow, as far as real steadfastness of purpose was concerned; Kinsale, who had never really worked in his life, whose fountain was a happy accident, whose intentions toward art were those of a philanderer, never those of a strong, steadfast lover! Kinsale had won Madge Rathburn!

Well, thank Heaven, Kinsale couldn't marry Madge Rathburn for a while yet! Old Rupert Addington's hundred dol-



His privacy was invaded by a young woman who somewhat indignantly demanded if he had taken possession of a steak not designed for his consumption.

lars wouldn't go very far toward provisioning a house and home—not even when Kinsale's eight hundred a year was added to the prize money. Madge, teaching her economics or algebra or whatever it was, made more than that herself. And Madge was sane; it was her sanity, as well as her beauty and her devout love of art, that had won Murger's heart. Being sane, she would, of course, refuse to enter upon such a harebrained experiment as that of housekeeping on eight hundred a year. They couldn't be married yet.

"Confound it, I'm beginning to think like the villain in a melodrama!" said Murger to himself.

Whereupon he arose from his self-communings, threw some clothing into a trunk, telephoned to a baggage-transfer company, shipped the luggage to the station, and went over to see Madge.

She was always lovely, with radiant, believing eyes, and hair a soft cloud of spun gold about her broad, sweet forehead. To-day, her loveliness was intensified, as if one beheld it in the very heart of a perfect dawn,

all pearl and rose-colored. Murger was sorry that he had come, suddenly. Then he was glad. For all the intolerable ache in his heart that started to throb at sight of her, he found that he could not have borne it to have missed the shining vision of her happiness.

He was leaving, he told her, for the West. And the manner in which he said the words told her why he was leaving.

"I am so sorry," she answered, and the sorrow was not only that he should be leaving, but that he should be leaving with a hurt spirit.

He thanked her.

"It's the first time," he announced gloomily, "that anything has come between me and my work. My work has always been first—always."

"That is as it should be," she replied, kindly.

"Is it? Is work first with Kinsale? Or are you?"

"Work!" she cried eagerly. "Work! I wouldn't have it otherwise. Oh, I think that a man who has a great gift, like Walter's—like yours—and doesn't give it the first place in his life is—is a traitor. Genius," she added, with rapt eyes, "is to be served on one's knees."

"Oh, genius!" scoffed Murger. "We aren't geniuses, most of us. Genius is a question of—conceit and necessity, for the most part. A man thinks he has a big message for the world, and he knows that he has to eat. So he works, out of mental inflation and physical deflation, and perhaps his friends call him a genius. But it's too big a word for the little gift."

"Not for—Walter's and yours," she told him, hesitating a little before she spoke her lover's name.

"When are you going to be married?" he flung at her.

She colored and smiled a trifle wistfully.

"Not very soon, I suppose. We aren't rich, you know. But—Miss Dor-

sey has bought the fountain. Did you know it? And some one in Cleveland wants a copy of it. That's rather good for a beginning, isn't it?"

"Bully!" declared Murger heartily. He scoured himself into the warmth of manner. Then he added—and he thought he was speaking wisdom out of true kindness: "You want to look out for Kinsale, you know, Madge. He isn't an old grind, like me. He thinks that art is served in odd moments. He'll think he can be a great artist in the time when he isn't making love to you. It can't be done. You've got to make him give you second place in his life. You've got to make him give everything second place. That's the only way artists are made. Do you think you are game for that?"

"I know I am," she replied steadily. The color had faded from her lovely face, and her eyes were quiet. "You see, I—loved—Walter's art—I loved his being an artist, a creator—before I loved him. Do you understand? If he shouldn't be an artist, shouldn't be a creator, why, he wouldn't be the man I loved. And truly, truly I know that with any one who aspires to art, there can be nothing placed before art. Nothing!"

Her quiet fervor was convincing. But Murger wanted to torture himself with further proofs of the intellectual perfection of understanding in the woman he had lost; and he wanted, in some hurt, perverse way, to torture her, too. So he went on:

"But consider! He'll forget to send you flowers on anniversaries, because he's absorbed by some new design——"

"I hope so."

"He'll forget to come home to dinner."

"Of course."

"He'll refuse to go to the opera on the nights when some one has lent you a box in the very middle of the horse-shoe, because he has a model coming

the next day at eight, and doesn't want to lose half a night's rest. Oh, I used to hear my mother scold and cry, when I was a boy, about such forgetfulness! Unfortunately my father used to weaken before the storms. That is why he never amounted to anything."

"And do you think I shall mind all that?" Madge laughed softly, triumphantly, sure of herself and of the vast understanding of her love.

"He'll be crochety. He'll take notions. He'll forbid you your best friend because she gets on his artistic nerves. He won't eat certain simple, ordinary food because he'll take the notion that it doesn't agree with him. He'll—he'll hardly grieve when your children are sick, when your own heart is wrung because some other vision than their little faces possesses him. Then what will you do?"

She was quite white, but her eyes were steady.

"I shall understand," she said firmly. "Truly, truly I shall understand. I know that I am marrying an artist. I know that my supreme gift to him must be to leave him free to be an artist. He must be obsessed with his art, with his creation, as I with mine. Nothing shall cloud my children's faces for me, and nothing must confuse the face of his dreams for him."

"To think," cried Murger despairingly, "that there is a woman like you in the world—a woman who really believes in the artist's mission, who will really sacrifice herself upon the altar of his accomplishment—to think that there is such a woman, and that I loved her, and that Walter Kinsale has won her! I don't feel that I can bear it. Good-by. I hope you'll be happy."

And with that, Murger flung bitterly out of the studio, where Madge and Jessica together kept their funny little house, and out of the Alley. And Madge sat with smile more rapt and eyes more exalted than before. She

was reinforcing her spirit by memorizing, as it were, all of Murger's looks and words. The artist must love his work above everything, above every one! Always she must remember that, and subdue any natural jealousy that might seek to rise within her. Even when her children were ill, even when their lovely little faces were drawn with pain, or their eyes clouded with fever, she must leave Kinsale free to do his work, to accomplish his art. It was all to be very wonderful.

Then, with a sigh, she came back to the present and to the fact that she had examination papers to correct. She gave another deeper sigh to the fact that it would be two or three years, even by a fortunate reckoning, before she could begin to show Kinsale how perfectly she understood how to be an artist's wife.

II.

Their engagement endured a year before it was broken—by Madge. The fountain was a year old, and nothing else had been born in Walter's fancy that bade fair to rival the fountain. It was not that Madge grew vulgarly weary of waiting for a lover who seemed unlikely to achieve the income necessary to even a modest venture in modern matrimony; as far as that was concerned, she would have been willing to wait until the end of time. But she could not endure it that Walter refused to live up to her definition of an artist. He refused to put work ahead of everything else in the world. Madge learned at length to be almost acrimonious, and to say that he put everything else in the world ahead of work.

"Certainly I put you ahead of work," Kinsale used to tell her, when she reproached him for this.

"But you mustn't!" she cried, Murger's words ringing in her recollection. "Else you are no true artist."

"If I don't put you ahead of work,"

he insisted gayly—for at first he could not be quite serious about the thing that she took so tragically—"I shall be no true lover. Now come, Madge, darling, which would you rather have me: a perfect Praxiteles—a P. P., so to speak—and a poor makeshift of a lover, or a poor dub of a journeyman sculptor and an altogether perfect lover?"

At first she had been won to a fleeting smile and a momentary softness by such pleasantries as these. But as the days passed without the appearance of serious effort on his part, the form of her reply grew more brief and acidulous.

"But, my darling! I have no ideas. Do you want me to go ahead sculpting when there isn't an idea in my head?"

"How do you seek for ideas?" she demanded fiercely.

Kinsale told her. He told her about walks in which he simply awaited inspiration; he told her about the restless, hopeful eyes he turned after men and women; he told her about reading; about days in art galleries—

But she interrupted him. What time had he gone home from Mary Fosdill's last night? Ah, two o'clock!

"Why," she cried scornfully, "I couldn't get up after an evening like that and be fit to teach about the law of diminishing returns out of a printed book! But you—you expect to have inspirations after dissipating with a crowd—"

"Ginger-ale dissipation," he interrupted self-defensively.

"I didn't say that you got drunk," she told him severely. "You dissipated as much time, as much freshness, as much mental energy, I dare say, as if you had gotten drunk. You seem to think that there is no dissipation unless one behaves like a beast. Oh, Walter, why won't you go to work?"

Walter declared himself most amiably ready to go to work as soon as he had anything ready to go to work upon.

And then she scolded—it was amazing to discover that Madge, with that delicately curved chin, those tender, dove-like eyes, could scold; but she could, and she did—and he talked playfully to her, he made little jokes, or he made love. Then one day he grew suddenly serious.

"Madge, don't you love me?" he asked directly, in answer to some plaint of hers about a hunting trip he had taken.

"Of course I love you," she replied defensively. "It's because I love you that I want you to be fully yourself, to be all that you were meant to be!"

"Are you sure that it is I whom you love—Walter Kinsale, rolling stone, Walter Kinsale, twenty-one years old and a bit of a fool about this pleasant world the good God has made for our enjoyment, or a mythical being—a Walter Kinsale who is very famous and whose works line Statuary Hall in the various capitol buildings of the various nations?"

"I love you for your possibilities, of course," she retorted. "Just as you love me not only for what I seem to be as I sit here opposite you, but for the possibilities you think you divine in me. I love you, the artist you, more than the trifter you."

"You're clever, my dear," he admitted. "You cut away my ground of complaint from under my feet. For I was going to say that you had no more right to love me for my work and for my artistic chances than you have to love me for my money and my chances of fortune. But you seem to have taken that form of reproach away from me. I think, though, that you've done it verbally rather than really. I think, my dear, that you feel cheated, as a girl who had become engaged to a rich man would feel cheated if she found that he didn't have enough to pay the dinner check."



And with that, Murger flung bitterly out of the studio and out of the Alley.

"That is rather vulgar," said Madge, with distaste.

"I wish we understood each other," he said, with a sigh.

"I wish with all my heart that we did!" cried Madge passionately. "I try hard enough to make you understand me. I believe in you, Walter. I know you have a gift—a great gift. I want you to develop it to the full. I want so to order your life for you that you *will* develop it—don't you understand?"

"It seems to me," he answered, "that you want to immure me in a prison that you call my art, and in which you propose that I shall labor, producing and producing; while you, as it were, attend to life outside for me. You want to put me in prison—that is it. But you want to make yourself a sort of slave to me and my prison, outside."

"That is mere perversity," said Madge coldly. "Isn't your gift the one real thing you have to offer the world?"

Don't you want to offer it to the world?"

"It seems to me," said Kinsale again, pondering his problem as he spoke, "that I have life to offer the world—life, as any man has it! No, my dear, I decline to take your definition of gifts and talents, and I reject your decision as to their place in the world. Does the cobbler out at the corner of the Alley live to mend shoes, or does he mend shoes to live? Would he be anything other than a maniac if he lived to mend shoes?"

"Does the power to interpret beauty to the world seem to you no better than the power to mend shoes, no more worthy of reverence and of sacrifice?" she asked him scornfully.

"My dear, I've knocked about the world such a lot!" Kinsale apologized to her. "The means by which men keep the breath in their bodies all look a good deal alike to me. Of course I admit that art or talent or genius, or whatever you call it, seems to give its possessors considerable advantage in the way of pleasure over the other forms of labor, the other means of earning a livelihood. But that is truly about as far as I can go. Mind you, Madge, I don't mean that I intend to be a loafer. I mean to work. But I don't intend to keep an altar to work erected in the front vestibule, to trip me in going out of my house, and other people in coming into it."

She wailed something about her disappointment; and Kinsale, I suppose, promised to try to do better. And then they went on again for a while. He had a commission to do a scion of the Dorsey connection—a slim young lad standing beside his horse. It was a portrait that he enjoyed doing, and he devoted himself to it quite assiduously, declining invitations, forgetting even to go and see Madge for a few days. And she grew visibly happier; she hugged to her breast the pain his forgetfulness

of her caused her. That, she cried within herself, was what she wanted—to suffer in the service of her lover's art!

But, the relief done, Kinsale lapsed again into his former casual style of existence. He insisted upon spending himself in a hundred ways not directly contributory to the cause of sculpture. He went about among other men's studios, smoking many cigarettes, enunciating endless opinions; he went to the opera; he dropped in at this place and that for tea; he even became interested in a political campaign and went about speaking in favor of some man or measure of his advocacy. Madge sat at home and wept tears of disappointment. It was unbearable! It was trivial, flip-pant! And in this mood she finally dismissed him.

It was about this time that Murger came back from California. When he learned what had happened, he set to work with great simplicity of method to win Madge for himself, and three months after she and Kinsale had separated, she and Murger were engaged. She looked scarcely happier in her new betrothal than in her old one. But Murger gave her no such ground for complaint as Kinsale had done.

Murger was as single-heartedly devoted to his work as it was possible for a man to be. He ate and slept, he exercised and he read, for it; he kept his friends quite frankly as a means of refreshment, so that he could work the harder; he declined society as a distraction from work; he grew fairly profane at the suggestion that he should take any part in civic life, and thereby subtract from his energy for work. Let the city take care of itself—he had his statues to do! Love itself, he said—and succeeded in persuading both Madge and himself of his sincerity in the utterance—he regarded as something to "get out of the way," so that there

would not be forever its menace between him and accomplishment.

And that year he lost the Addington prize to a young Italian boy of the neighborhood who alternated work in the studios with attending the paternal fruit stand. Kinsale had not competed.

Summer rolled around again, and Miss Dorsey invited Madge and a half dozen others up to the place in New Hampshire. Kinsale was understood to be "off on another tangent." He had taken a party of slum lads to a summer camp on the shore of the lake, on one arm of which Adriana Dorsey's summer home bordered; indeed, she owned the little wooded cape on which the rough group of "fresh-air" log cabins stood, and she financed the undertaking each year. But the locale of the philanthropic enterprise and Highlands, the Dorsey estate, were separated by many miles, so that there was no great likelihood of an embarrassing meeting between Madge and Kinsale.

Madge had heard of his new interest with a great upwelling of bitterness. He was impossible, impossible! Why should he be doing what a score of grubbly earnest young men could do better than he, and meantime be neglecting his own real task in the world? The grubbly earnest young men, with their tiresome "surveys" of this industry and that, of this municipality and that, with their pamphlets and their statistical tables, could never, never model a figure that would make the heart of the beholder leap with sudden joy. The grubbly earnest young men could do nothing except be grubbly earnest. And here was Walter, with the winged fancy, the winged fingers, doing their work while his own went neglected!

Adriana was very sweet and gracious to her and to Murger. Indeed, Adriana was always sweet and gracious. She seemed to feel a trifle apol-

ogetic about her millions, and tried to atone for them by a painstaking interest in other people's pursuits. She suggested that Murger undertake a portrait bust of her father, from photographs, paintings, and a death mask. Murger was rather flattered—he had always subconsciously resented Adriana's interest in Kinsale's work. It was a sop to his vanity that she should choose him, and not Walter, for this piece of filial piety. And he proceeded to immerse himself in the preparation for the task.

One day Adriana apologized to Madge for Murger's absorption.

"I did not mean to spoil your holiday by my suggestion about my father's bust," she said. "I didn't realize with what whole-souled ardor Mr. Murger throws himself into his work."

"I like it," said Madge briefly.

"Yes, but it makes it a little lonely for you. I had supposed that you two young people would find no end of pleasure in exploring the country round about. It's such a beautiful landscape—such a noble one, I think."

"Yes," agreed Madge listlessly. "It is very beautiful. But—you know that is what I like chiefly about Ernst—his capacity for giving himself entirely to his work. You mustn't smile. I mean it. He doesn't allow me to interfere, and I am glad of it. You know, when I was engaged to Walter Kinsale, I was always fretting and unhappy, because he had no capacity for work at all. He had a gift, but no capacity for work. We were very wretched."

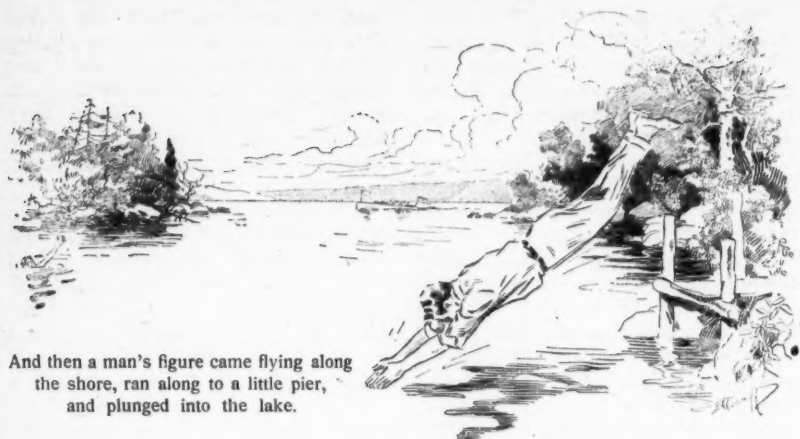
"And you are very happy now?" asked Adriana gently.

Madge flushed, and her lips trembled. But she answered steadily:

"Very. I am sure that Ernst will—amount to something."

"Ah! Then you are ambitious?"

"I am not!" cried Madge. "Not in the vulgar way you mean. I don't care



And then a man's figure came flying along the shore, ran along to a little pier, and plunged into the lake.

whether or not he makes a success. I don't care whether or not he sells things, has big orders. I only care that he is a—genius, and that he regards his gift seriously and gives himself to it.”

“It is a wonderful quality,” agreed Adriana, in her gentle, courteous, almost colorless way. Then she mused a little. “The capacity for work,” she repeated softly. And then she raised her face, with a brightness upon it, to Madge. “Mr. Murger undoubtedly has it. You will have your heart's desire—I think. But there is another genius, there is another gift vouchsafed to a few people—oh, to a very few! The capacity for life. Do you know what I mean? I think—I think that Walter Kinsale has that.” And then, still gazing at Madge's rebellious face, she added: “Ah, my dear, you are very young! You are all very young. It is only as one begins to grow older that the idea of a life lived joyously and generously begins to seem to one much of an achievement—a piece of fine artistry.”

“What a lovely excuse for a waste of talent!” cried Madge, half smiling, half angered.

“You don't agree with me? You

don't regard life itself as a possible *magnum opus*?”

“Oh, I dare say it's a possible view, a debatable one, at least. But not where there are neglected talents—Oh, I can't talk about it calmly! It still makes me too angry, as it used to when Walter and I quarreled and quarreled about it.”

“Aren't you a little bit in love with Walter still, my dear?” asked Adriana, in that cool, liquid voice of hers, with her shadowy eyes full upon the girl's mutinous face.

“Never!” cried Madge, with fervor.

And Adriana smiled and checked a sigh, and called the girl's attention to a clump of larkspurs—brilliantly blue—at the foot of the terrace.

They went out on the lake that afternoon in Adriana's motor boat, a polished, shining, cushioned, awninged argosy of pleasure. Murger, of course, declined to go; he was immersed in the study of old Horace Dorsey's photographs, extending back to the period when he had been daguerreotyped in his mother's arms. Adriana was distressed for Madge's sake, but that young woman insisted that she was perfectly happy.

"She's a wonderful philosopher," Adriana explained to the voyagers. "She really thinks more of Mr. Murger's work than she does of his society. Is he not a lucky artist to find so understanding a lady?"

They agreed that Ernst Murger was indeed lucky; and then, after the habit of idle people, they began to discuss the place of work in life—its relation to happiness, and all sorts of allied fine topics. And they ate their sandwiches and drank their tea and sang songs and talked about nature and about the summer settlements glimpsed darkly among the pines. Other motor boats hailed them from time to time, and now and then they saw canoes flash swiftly from point to point.

Suddenly, as they rounded one of the densely wooded promontories in the lake, a piercing scream shattered the summer afternoon's peace. One—and then another.

"Help! Help!" rang a voice. "Help! Help!"

But the waters of the cove they had entered seemed bare. Then some one, straining frightened eyes, saw a feeble arm beating for a second at the blue water; and then a man's figure came flying along the shore, ran along to a little pier, and plunged into the lake.

Adriana's skipper had not waited her word, but had swiftly changed his course and was bearing down upon the place where that futile white arm had battered at the waters a moment before. It seemed an endless time before he came within hailing distance of the swimmer from the shore. And even as he reached that point, the frantic bare arm reappeared and fastened convulsively about the swimmer's neck. There was a cry from Adriana's boat; the skipper shouted: "Stun him! Hit him! Stun him!" But there was no obedience of action in reply.

One of the boat hands asked a brief question or two of the skipper, and

then shot over the boat's side. And then there was an eternity of circling around, and then came a shout and tossed ropes and wild activity. It seemed hours before figures were hauled aboard, unconscious, and the boat-hand rescuer clambered, dripping, after them.

The women huddled away; the men fell to work upon the inert bodies. And Madge, unable to keep her fascinated eyes at home, gave a little moan, for suddenly she saw that the form of the man who had run along the shore and out upon the stringpiece and plunged into the water was the form of Walter Kinsale. And in that moment of recognition, she heard the verdict of the men who sought to revive him.

Fifteen years ago! And all that remains of the work wherewith Kinsale might have gladdened the world is the fountain in Adriana Dorsey's garden.

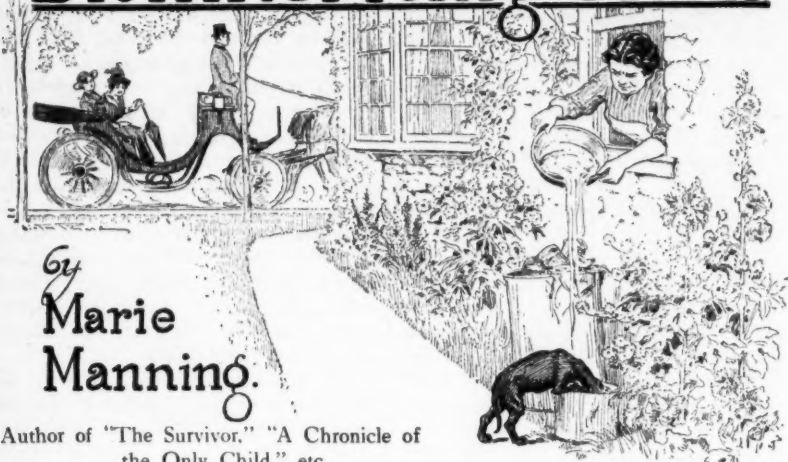
Or is it indeed so? The swarth-haired boy whom he had managed to keep alive—though it was ordained that he himself should perish—that boy, a man of thirty now, has wrought already wonderful dreams in clay. Madge Rathburn, who undertook his education that sad autumn after she had come back to town with another broken engagement to her credit, feels that she is carrying on Walter's work.

Though even about that she is not sure. Perhaps Walter's work was something quite different. Perhaps, she says to herself and sometimes to Adriana Dorsey, it is true that his life itself may be a man's *magnum opus*. And surely in no more perfect way could a man to whom life, and not art, was the chief concern round his labor than by going out, young, unwearied, in a supreme work of sacrifice. And she finds it a peculiar gratification that Murger has not yet produced anything great, while her protégé—hers and Walter's—has done marvelous things.

Disinheriting Uncle

By
**Marie
Manning.**

Author of "The Survivor," "A Chronicle of the Only Child," etc.



ILLUSTRATED BY VICTOR FERARD

"Uncle" was a black-and-tan with expectations of a fortune and a beautiful home that disturbed the other heirs.

BEFORE he became prosperous, Uncle had always worn a long, shiny, black coat that fell in at the waistline and ended in a straight tail. His smoothly shaven face gave the impression of having formerly borne whiskers, and his eye had the calculating quality of one who has lived largely on voluntary contributions from the faithful.

It is a curious commentary on human fortunes, but only after prosperity had overtaken him did a look of wistfulness begin to creep into his expression of benevolent sophistication. Something seemed to have gone out of his life, something that all the padded luxury with which he was surrounded could not replace.

By temperament an adventurer, he hated the daily care and cossetting to which he was subjected. Waking, he

thought of nothing but of running away; sleeping, he dreamed of it. But in his heart he knew it would never come to pass—he was too old.

And now, lest Uncle be regarded as an ungrateful old gentleman, callous to the devotion lavished upon him, let it be said immediately that he was nobody's male aunt. Uncle, the gentle-hearted pessimist, was a black-and-tan.

The name had been given him primarily in derision. Mrs. Fordyce, his mistress, treated him more like an adored son than like a tramp dog she had picked up on the highroad. Mrs. Rodgers, Mrs. Fordyce's stepgranddaughter, hearing tales of daily drives, worsted bed socks, and pasteurized cream, began to "fear that her uncle would be spoiled."

Back to Mrs. Fordyce flew the rumor with accretions; there was no love lost

between the two ladies, owing to complications involving real estate. The widow of General Fordyce—hero of Gettysburg, where he left a leg—affected to be charmed with the name. She had "Uncle" engraved on a ten-dollar silver collar. (Uncle's own market value was about thirty cents, or the net price he would have fetched at a biological laboratory for purposes of vivisection.)

Back flashed the tale of the collar to the Rodgers.

"I hope the fat's not in the fire as far as the boys are concerned?" queried the boys' father.

"It's been there ever since grandpapa married her. But how she can leave Fordyce Lodge to any one else I don't see. It belonged to my grandmother—it was in her family three generations. It was bad enough to change the name from 'Dalewood' to 'Fordyce Lodge.' But if she turns that lovely old place into a dog shelter in honor of that mongrel, as every one says she will——"

As history relates of some of her more dramatic figures, Uncle had had a "varied career." He began life a round, fat puppy, and grew in rotundity and fatness till he resembled a black, short-haired muff—child's size—set up on legs. He was suffered to call home the residence of a more-than-casual family who, departing for Europe, neglected the formality of either chloroforming him or finding a home for him.

Reduced to refuse cans, he shrank from muff size to that of the meagerest boa. Meals were too irregular to make a fighting man of him—he was undersized, he lacked muscle. But he was a good mixer, and the rough-and-ready life of the streets developed philosophy and humor; a toughness of fiber that almost amounted to stoicism added a hint of reserve; and personal freedom was to him dearer than regular meals or a roof.

City life he found oppressive during

July and August, and he was accustomed to devote those months to walking tours, preferably in the Berkshires. While on one of these, his fate of idle sybarite overtook him and held him with chains he had no power to break.

On that fatal day, he had spent the morning in swimming and dozing on the bank of a stream. The terrific heat made the consideration of meals negligible. But about three o'clock, the idea of a cold snack began persistently to haunt his imagination, and remembering a little town about two miles back, where there had been many chicken yards, he deduced from past experiences the possibility of fat chicken bones among the debris.

He was not mistaken, but as he set about satisfying his appetite with the furtive haste that, though necessary when foraging, never failed to offend his æsthetic sense, an inhuman cook put an end to his feast in a manner so brutal that it is painful to record—deliberately she poured a pan of hot water over him.

While Uncle shrieked his suffering and his rage, a lady in a crested victoria drove by, and Uncle was whirled away to opulence—and to chains.

Mrs. Fordyce's religion was orthodox dog worship. However, the late specialist in refuse cans was bored to death by it, and only common decency kept him from running away. The call of the open was in his blood, but this woman—drat her!—had saved his life; he owed her something. Uncle, for all his humble origin, had his code.

His palace prison was magnificent, the food lavish; but the society was deadly. The family consisted of a couple of elderly and bromidic women—Mrs. Fordyce and her companion, Miss Hatton, formerly a trained nurse. He regarded them as a pair of milk poultrices; they actually crocheted a worsted ball for him—at his age! The tabasco of his domesticity was supplied

by Madame Pompadour, a magnificent Persian cat with ten generations of blue-ribboned ancestry back of her. There was no other dog. Mrs. Fordyce had sustained a grievous loss immediately before Uncle's advent, and no one dared mention the name of the deceased "Flip" in her presence.

One of the few pleasures that fell to Uncle, in the three-ply, double-width plush of his existence, was Madame's attitude in regard to him. Lineage, breeding, ancestral blue ribbons, broad "a" of her English accent, dropped at sight of him, leaving a rag, a bone, and a hank of hair, a set of claws, an unexpurgated vocabulary.

Uncle's "Good morning" was almost episcopal in its outward dignity; Madame's was shockingly profane. She said things in her full, fruity contralto that could never be set down on this chaste page, her tail whirling, meantime, like the baton of a drum major, her smile horribly white and fangy.

"Canaille! Yow-w-w! Pfsst!" she would hiss, and the repartee would begin.

But she was no match for Uncle, whose Alma Mater had been the streets. Outwardly suave, patient, long-suffering—when either of the poultices was about—he said things in her ear that no woman worthy the name could have stood.

"Naughty puss!" Mrs. Fordyce would deplore, secretly delighted with the tantrums of her children.

Madame would grow only the more infuriated. What kind of talk was this to a cat who, in her magnificent gray ruff, bore a striking resemblance to Catherine de' Medici—Catherine sinister, brooding, terrible—Catherine about to give the signal for the Massacre of St. Bartholomew?

Uncle hugged close his domestic difficulties. Without them, life would have been unbearably tame.

Such was the state of affairs in the

Fordyce household when its chatelaine determined upon an unaccountable step. Before finally disinheriting the general's kith and kin in favor of the "Gwendolin Fordyce Animal Rescue League," she would sample a couple of the younger generation of her late husband's family—see what they were made of. The choice fell to two great-grandsons, John Calvert and Todd Rodgers, the latter president of the "Boys' Sporting and Fighting Club of North America," numbering six strong, without counting the colored janitor.

"I shan't make a single suggestion to Todd about being nice to Mrs. Fordyce, and Mary Calvert is not going to make any to John. That would be too odious! She may like them, or——" Todd's mother did not finish.

But Todd's father did:

"The chances are in favor of their being lumped. That Academy for Reclaiming Fallen Cats—or whatever queerness it is she proposes to endow with the Fordyce shekels—is too alluring for her to renounce."

So the two boys departed for their strange visit with no idea of the importance of their mission. They barely knew their prospective hostess; they knew only that she was some sort of steprelation. But beyond this they were wholesomely ignorant. They had been told only that they were to behave like little gentlemen, brush their teeth and hair regularly, and not carry anything alive in their pockets. (Todd was rather fond of taking an old white rat, named Annie, with him on journeys. And once, when Annie had been beating her way on a train in Todd's pocket, and he had taken her out for air and exercise, she had not been alone—triplets had come to brighten her solitude. In his excitement, Todd had spilled some of Annie's progeny about the car. There had been the makings of a near-riot in the scene that had followed.)

From the beginning of the "step-

visit," as the boys called it, Todd and John were horribly homesick. Mrs. Fordyce was not disposed to be ingratiating; she felt that when little boys were noisy, they were bad; when they were quiet, they were probably worse.

Miss Hatton, who had reasons of her own for not wishing to disturb the existing order of things, treated the visitors with a long-distance aloofness calculated to drive stouter souls to desperation. The one member of the Fordyce family who courted the boys openly and without reserve was Uncle; the late vagrant loved their kind.

But the "Sporters and Fighters" did not reciprocate Uncle's affectionate interest. He was too disgracefully coddled by the doting steprelative and her companion to be received on boy terms as a desirable, everyday, playing dog. Little did they guess the canker gnawing at his heart on this very score! The case against him looked black. Daily they were accustomed to hear discussed his temperature, his appetite, his worsted bed socks—whether he had or had not kicked them off during the night—and similar titbits of avuncular interest.

"That dog's an ol' stuff, that's what he is—an ol' stuff!" John declared.

But one day the "ol' stuff" proved that he was at least human. It was on the occasion when the visitors discovered that by standing at a certain angle on the back porch, they could fish



"Naughty puss!" Mrs. Fordyce would deplore, secretly delighted with the tantrums of her children.

for doughnuts through the bars of the storeroom window. At sight of a stone jar full of this barricaded delicacy, a little zest began to trickle back into life. Doubtless they would have been welcome to the doughnuts; it was the iron bars that tempted them.

"Gee, wisht I had a fishhook! Couldn't I git 'um to bite!"

"I gotta fishhook," John remarked casually. "It's in the laig o' my best trousers. Won't come out."

"I kin git it out." Todd, president of the "Sporters and Fighters," was used to dealing with emergencies.

He made good his claim, snagging only two inches of trouser leg doing it.

The strange disciples of Izaak Walton now patiently devoted their energies to casting their lines through the window bars. It was a more difficult art than fishing for suckers. Doughnut after doughnut was snagged, mutilated, and torn by the hook to shreds, before one was landed. As they divided their first spoils with strict impartiality, Uncle nudged Todd in the leg and humbly petitioned for a bite. He did it in the dog fashion they knew; every trace of the spoiled old gentleman had dropped from him. He gobbled his doughnut like a hungry black-and-tan, awaited the hauling in of the next catch, and begged for a bit of that, too.

"Why, Uncle, you ain't such an ol' stuff, after all! Hi, Uncle! Good old dog!" And the friendship began then and there.

But the gentle anglers had not been unobserved. Miss Hatton descended upon them, accompanied by Madame; and as they walked together, tandem fashion, the resemblance between them was almost startling. Both looked like Catherine de' Medici signaling for the massacre; both had the same white, fangy smile; both were supremely happy in discovering the boys in something illicit.

"Oh, if you are hungry, why didn't you say so?" purred Miss Hatton, Madame accompanying her, singing second.

In a jiffy, Miss Hatton unlocked the storeroom door and presented the anglers with the entire jar of doughnuts. Instantly the anglers had a surfeited feeling in regard to doughnuts; it was as if they had taken a cure for them.

"No'm, thank you, we don't care for any more."

"And how many has *he* had?" Miss Hatton indicated Uncle.

Uncle hung his head. He knew he had been mingling with the Philistines.

"Not over four, ma'am."

"I'll give him a dose of oil."

"Pfs-st!" hissed Madame. "Serves you right!"

The doughnut fishing party disintegrated; homesickness, ennui, weariness of spirit, smote the visitors. They saw Uncle depart for his afternoon drive with their steprelative and Miss Hatton, chief of the bureau of domestic secret service. They were too miserable even to comment on their discovery that Uncle was ~~human~~ human. They sat still for at least twenty minutes, sodden with wretchedness. Then Todd remembered that they had never explored the attic. Attics were attics, the world over, even in the homes of the "step."

But this attic seemed different. It was repellently clean and picked up; everything was labeled—bundles and boxes bore black-lettered tables of contents. That is, all but one—an oblong box that stood apart from all the rest. It was a substantial, well-made chest, big enough for a boy to hide in, and there was not a hint as to its contents on the cover.

"What you reckon's in that box?"

"Nothin'. Thur ain't nothin' wuth while in this place, 'n' if there was, dog-gone if they wouldn't spoil it! Look how they done about them doughnuts!"

Master Calvert gloomily acquiesced in his friend's pessimism.

"Gee, I'd like to be back home, even if they was takin' away my dessért 'r puttin' me to bed."

"Me, too!"

"Le's look in the ol' box, anyhow."

Bored to the *n*th degree over the possibilities of this Pandora box, Todd Rodgers lifted the lid. The blood-curdling yell that the contents of the chest evoked sent John Calvert sprawl-

ing over a chair in his eagerness to get a peep. But the lid had already clattered from the nerveless grasp of the president of the "Sporters and Fighters." Never, despite the callousing effect of filling the office of chief executive of that reckless band, had the eyes of the president beheld such a sight. He seemed to shrink, like a pricked balloon, and, like a pricked balloon, to float feebly away from the chest. But the horror of the thing fascinated him; he was no longer a free agent, and back again he came, like the murderer of romance revisiting the scene of his crime.

Master Calvert, alert as a fox terrier, demanded "what in heck" it was.

"Legs! Just sawed-off legs!" gulped Todd.

"Don't b'lieve it! S'm' ol' thing looks like legs."

"I dare you, like a thousand dare-dogs, to open it!"

John's emotions were mixed; he craved his full pound of horror—yet sawed-off legs at such close range had their drawbacks.

"You're afraid!"

"Ain't!"

"Prove it!"

John wished he had no reputation to sustain, but as a "Human Dare-devil"—his name among the "Sporters and Fighters"—there was but one course open to him. He felt as if he were wading to the chest through waters that sapped his vitality at every step. He gritted his teeth to keep them from chattering. The eye of the president brightened. Dog-gone, but Johnny was brave! Some impulse, perchance of loyalty, or maybe a flash of courage, or again, perhaps, a surge of human weakness—the ambition not to be left out of this thrilling exploit when the tale should be told—impelled Todd to advance with his friend and gingerly to assist in the lifting of the lid.

Their eyes, as they drank in the con-

tents of this Bluebeard receptacle, protruded like the eyes of crawfish. Simultaneously their mouths opened; involuntarily they shaped themselves for a second yell. But a closer scrutiny revealed to their excited vision that while the chest contained indubitable legs, they were not, nor ever had been, of flesh and blood.

"By golly, they're soldiers' legs! Say, I know what they are! M' grandfather hadda wooden leg. These here must 'a' been his ol' ones."

"Sure! That's what they meant when they talked 'bout him leavin' a leg at Gettysburg! Dog-gone, I never could see before how he done it!"

Master Calvert fell upon the ghastly loot with enthusiasm. The legs charmed him to a sort of rhapsodic silence. Never had his train of cars that—sometimes—went in response to key and mechanism, his guinea pigs that breathed and lived, his ball-bearing skates that lent him Mercury wings, his bicycle that had become a sort of localized wishing carpet—never had these treasures moved him like these singular replicas of human fragments. Already he had five or six of them out of the box, working their joints, the thirsty soil of his curiosity sucking up every detail.

But to Todd had come the fine, frenzied look of the traditional poet; a seer of visions, the legs were to him but so many fragments of a gigantic scheme, in horror equal to the most splendid inspiration of a Dante or a Vereschagin.

"You lemme be till I git her worked out!"

The request was entirely superfluous, Master Calvert being wholly absorbed in a leg the mechanism of which differed slightly from that of the others.

"Say, John, I gotter all worked out! We're goin' to have trench warfare."

"Where at?"

"Trench's all dug—out'n the lawn



But the gentle anglers had not been unobserved. Miss Hatton descended upon them, accompanied by Madame, both looking like Catherine de' Medici signaling for the massacre.

where they're chasin' up that leak in the fountain. We c'n hammer on a wood box f'r artil'ry—then throw up dirt 'n' legs! I speak t' be Gener'l Grant commandin' the forces, and you c'n be the man that loses the legs."

But the rôle of human centipede—there were at least ten legs in the box—left the Human Dare-devil strangely unmoved. His was a nature fitted by every instinct to command; the part of humble leg loser of the trench, no matter what claims to glory it might present, did not appeal to Master Calvert.

"Aw, say now, Todd, what makes you want to boss everythin' all the time? No one could lose all them legs."

"Didn't I think this game up? Ain't trench warfare mine? 'Sides, who said you was to be only one soldier? You c'n be's many as you like. You c'n be a forlorn hope if you like, and be cut to pieces gallantly defending the trench. Or say, d'you remember that piece in the reader that says: 'Half

a leg—half a leg—half a leg onward?' You c'n be him, if you like."

"Oh, shucks, Todd, I don't want to be any ol' f'r'lorn hope 'r any half a leg, either! You be Grant 'n' I'll be Lee, and we c'n both lose some legs."

"If you're Lee, you gotta s'rrender to me—"

"I don't want to do all the s'rrenderin', Todd. 'Tain't fair. We'll take turns at s'rrenderin'."

Master Rodgers, despite his love for posts of authority, had a latent sense of justice, and agreed to an occasional turn at the rôle of vanquished. Whereupon, they proceeded to remove their stage properties to the theater of war.

While the cork legs of the late General Fordyce were being secretly conveyed downstairs, where, oh, where, was that horde of below-stairs aristocrats who helped so materially to raise the standard of living in and about that chaste suburb? Tea, buttered toast, and the gossip of high life occupied

them to the exclusion of all other earthly considerations. For the moment, they were happy to forget that trilogy of nuisance—Mrs. Fordyce, Miss Hatton, and Uncle. The humble visitors never cast a ripple on the surface of their consciousness. It seemed, considering time, place, circumstances, as if the very powers of darkness must have been secretly in league with the two valiant warriors.

Near the now stilled fountain, on the velvet lawn, a great trench that gaped a red clay wound to the invisible water main yawned hospitably inviting. The workmen, true to some impelling instinct, had torn up the lawn and departed—for that something always needed and never brought—leaving picks, mattocks, and piles of loose dirt in their wake.

Reënforcements of artillery in the shape of empty wooden boxes were easily procured from the stable loft. These, when pounded with the handles of spades and mattocks, made a fair representation of artillery. But Grant and Lee, it developed, had a good deal of ignoble drudgery to perform before that splendidly dramatic moment of the surrender. Like moles, they toiled in the trench, widening and deepening the earthwork to admit the largest of the siege guns. Their clothes took on the color of the soil; their nails broke; their hands bled; but—each opposing general worked for “freedom.”

Todd hammered a murderous fusillade. An ominous silence followed. Dirt flew; then a leg; then another. The warriors discovered that there was an art in this thing; the volcanic eruptions of dirt and legs could be managed by practice with a sort of automatic dexterity. Finesse and lightninglike rapidity were called into play. It was horribly hard work, but a chance like this did not come every day; and with sweat and travail, the horrid carnage went on.

With unabated fury raged the battle; the dismembered limbs flew with greater agility; every inch of territory was hotly contested. Neither dreamed of surrendering; such a course would have savored of anticlimax, with the roar of artillery filling the air and always the crowning realism of the legs.

Such was the state of affairs in the Battle of Fountain Trench—as the neighborhood long referred to it—when a crested victoria turned in at the gate and rolled toward the house. Two ladies occupied the seat of honor, and on the smaller seat, facing them, wrapped in splendid misery, sat a little old black-and-tan, turning gray in patches.

The din that had seemed to come from their own sacred precincts, as they had completed the last lap of their drive, increased in volume and became localized. Both ladies craned forward, just in time to witness a spectacular eruption of legs, stones, and dirt, accompanied by sinister thundering.

The mind of each leaped to a simultaneous conclusion—an explosion of gas or dynamite had blown to pieces the workmen in the trench. Horror froze Mrs. Fordyce into stunned inactivity. But, true to the instinct of her late profession, the sickening sight just witnessed galvanized Miss Hatton's energy to concert pitch. Bidding the coachman take Mrs. Fordyce home and call the housekeeper, she leaped from the victoria with the agility of a probationer and darted for the scene of horror.

Taking advantage of the panic, Uncle made good his escape from the victoria, joined his friends in the trench, and then and there became a dog of war. Lee and Grant, as far as ever from surrendering, were shoveling loose dirt against the next casualty. A glance more than sufficed for Miss Hatton. She tried to recover Uncle, but the little old dog seemed to have re-

turned to his puppyhood and become smitten with the same gleeful madness as the boys. He dug frantically with his paws; he was here, there, and everywhere, barking with delight, acting as scout, aid-de-camp, ally, or enemy. It was all the same to Uncle—he was all things to all boys. The rôle of pampered invalid seemed to have fallen from his shoulders forever.

Miss Hatton overtook her patroness before the sympathetic housekeeper had piloted her up the front steps. Her message was brief—brief as Cæsar's famous dispatch:

"No explosion. Boys playing with the general's cork legs."

"The general's legs! The general's cork legs?" Mrs. Fordyce seemed to demand confirmation of this outrage from high heaven.

Miss Hatton, with pursed primness, repeated:

"The general's legs!"

Terrible as a cataclysm of nature, Mrs. Fordyce made her way straight to the battlefield, seeming to grow in bulk and stature as she advanced. An iceberg ambushed in fog, bearing down upon a hapless ship—a jolly liner amusing itself happily with simple maritime pleasures—is the only comparable figure of speech. And, like an iceberg again, her approach seemed to chill her victims as she swept toward them and passed over them with horrid, grating speech; then sailed on, serene and terrible as an avenging natural force that reckons not with human woe.

Two hours later, two pinkly gleaming boys, with every trace of trench warfare scrubbed from their innocent faces, were placed, with a precaution reserved for high explosives, in charge of the conductor on a homebound train. That official was warned in advance that they were dangerous, but that their people would shortly relieve him of his responsibility. Miss Hatton's hope that nothing "unpleasant" would happen

while he had them in hand rather suggested a hanging judge's cheerful ejaculation, "May the Lord have mercy on your soul!"

But after the first shock of their disgrace had subsided, both culprits experienced a feeling of relief that their social martyrdom was over. But the Battle of Fountain Trench, while it lasted, had been a magnificent military engagement, one on which the veterans would always look back with the deepest feelings. The blood-raw patriotism of both sides, the titanic struggle, the drama, the splendid realism, had been richly worth the consequences.

"You tell me this," Todd fiercely demanded of his fellow warrior. "What fellas do you know—the roughnecks 'r any other gang—that ever fit a war with real legs before? I tell you it ain't been done."

His brother-in-arms warmly verified this claim; history—that is, boy history—had not its counterpart.

"Say, how do you git y'r leg under the seat and onto the other side o' my foot?"

Todd, occupying the seat nearest the aisle, was honestly puzzled at what appeared to be the accordionlike properties of his friend's extremity.

"I didn't. Look-a-here's both my feet."

"Then there's sumpun under the seat a-nudgin' me." In a jiffy, both boys were on the floor investigating. "I'll be dog-goned!"

"How in heck did he ever git there?"

"Ain't he a bird?"

"Say, well, ain't he the limit?"

For crouching on the floor, shrunk within himself—like a largish child traveling for half fare and urged by mother to "sit small"—was Uncle.

How he got there, how he eluded the ladies of his family, his nurse, and the rest of his entourage on the one hand, and the conductor, brakeman, and traveling public on the other, is to this



Both ladies craned forward, just in time to witness a spectacular eruption of legs, stones, and dirt, accompanied by sinister thundering.

day an unsolved mystery. But there he was, quietly ecstatic at being reunited with his friends, yet, knowing himself to be contraband, terrified at the possibilities of discovery.

"Hi, Uncle! Good old doggie!"

Uncle entreated them with white of eye, faint pressure of paw, and tail gently waved at halfmast, not to expose him, by their enthusiasm, to needless risk. Instantly Todd and John resumed their seats, and, for the rest of the journey, Uncle, silent as a sculptured dog, continued to "ride small."

At Clifton Junction, two anxious-looking fathers boarded the train. Mrs. Fordyce's telegram had read:

Meet boys at Clifton. Sending them home, Behavior criminal.

The presence of the venerable Uncle did not make matters look any better

for the boys. But as it had been agreed, by all the parents concerned, that no court of inquiry should be held till they reached the Rodgers' home, where Mrs. Calvert also waited, no questions were asked.

"Now out with it! What did you do?" Mr. Rodgers demanded of his son, after both mothers, regardless of the nature of the crimes committed, had thoroughly kissed the culprits.

And Todd told of the Battle of Fountain Trench, from the moment of discovery of the Bluebeard loot in the attic chest down to finding Uncle—unexpected and uninvited—under the seat of the car.

Mr. Rodgers abruptly left the room by one door, Mr. Calvert by the other. Neither mother glanced at the other, and the prisoners at the bar knew this

for a good sign. Finally Todd's mother said:

"I'm sorry Fordyce Lodge will go to strangers. I've spent so many happy days there." And she held Todd a bit longer when she kissed him good night.

Of course, Uncle was sent back next day—returned *de luxe*, as it were, by a friend who proposed motoring in the neighborhood of Mrs. Fordyce's chastely elegant suburb. The rigors of the baggage car were not to be considered for one so venerable. Uncle's grief at parting from his young friends was heart-rending.

"Good-by, Uncle! Good-by, old doggie! Sic-c-c-k 'um all for me when you get there!"

And the little old dog was whirled away to the slow martyrdom of his hot-water bottles, his worsted socks, his thermometer, his gruels, and the constant care of his all-too-doting mistress.

No hint of the prodigal nature of Uncle's escapade dimmed his welcome home. Mrs. Fordyce and Miss Hatton believed that he had been deliberately abducted, and his air of utter dejection they attributed to shock at being separated from them. Miss Hatton took his temperature, prescribed a glass of sherry, gave him a hypodermic of strychnia; then, bundling him into his worsted bed socks and his slumber robe, she left him to sleep in a darkened room. Uncle was too discouraged to "rat" his bed or kick off his socks.

He began to pine away; his tan spots became almost white; and his eyes had the cobwebby look of extreme age. He no longer said "good morning" to Madame; the feud had lost its savor; he had no pride in his profanity. He became indifferent to broiled calves' liver; milk chocolate left him unmoved; nothing seemed capable of rousing him.

Then one day he disappeared altogether.

"He has gone off to die, that his passing may not distress me!" wailed Mrs.

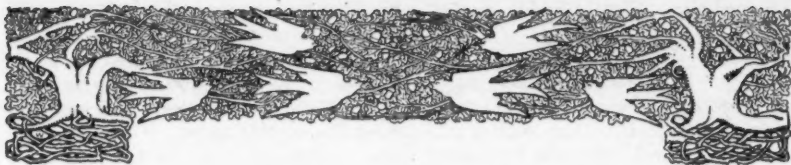
Fordyce, and immediately she organized a band of searchers.

When night came and there were no tidings of the black-and-tan, there was wailing and lamentation; and on the flood tide of this came a telegram from Mr. Rodgers, saying that Uncle had turned up at their home, very tired, but apparently well, and what should be done with him?

Mrs. Fordyce was not the woman to show weakness, whatever her deeper feelings may have been. She wired Mr. Rodgers to make what disposition he pleased of Uncle, as she never wished to see or hear of him again. Then she sent for her man of business, and, revoking all former wills and testaments, she disinherited Uncle legally and in due form. The securities she had decided to set apart to found a home, in his memory, for stray dogs she willed and bequeathed to his bitterest enemy—Madame. There would be no dog shelter and rescue, but the executors were duly empowered to establish a home for friendless cats, in memory of her faithful Persian. Everything was well and formally done—everything but the signature to the document, and this, for some curiously superstitious reason, Mrs. Fordyce neglected.

If Uncle knew, and he was such a worldly-wise old dog one is almost tempted to believe he did, the unsigned will would have been his crowning happiness, giving his boy friends their chance of inheriting the Fordyce fortune.

His days were drawing to a close in absolute happiness; the most succulent bone a kind fate had reserved for the last. The boys treated him as an equal; he was accorded none of the humiliating exemptions of age; the horrid paraphernalia of invalidism was spared him; and he was happy, happy in living his last days as he had been created—a dog.



Evelyn Forgets

By Royal A. Brown

ILLUSTRATED BY E. A. FURMAN

Exciting things happen in this gay little mystery story, winding up with an elopement.

THE morning Evelyn sailed, I went to the pier to see her off. As usual, she was worrying about everything she could think of, and was as flurried as if that trip across were to be her first, instead of her twentieth, or thereabouts.

"I'm so glad you came, because there was something in particular I wanted you to do for me, Ruth," she said. "Only," she added plaintively, "I can't remember what it was. I know it was fearfully important, too."

She was just on the point of worrying about that when the Grahams came, and that diverted her attention; but she remembered it again at the last moment.

"I'll write you the moment I remember, and I only hope it won't be too late," she wailed.

The next morning I had forgotten all about Evelyn when the maid told me there was a young woman in the morning room who wanted to see me. I went down, and found the young woman to be simply dressed and unusually attractive.

"I have a letter of introduction from Mrs. Hildreth."

She paused expectantly, it seemed to

me, and it flashed into my mind that this was what Evelyn had forgotten. I took the letter. It read:

DEAR RUTH: Trente is the very best maid I've ever had. I wanted her to go with me, but she is so afraid of the water, poor child, that I hadn't the heart to press her. Ruthie, dear, she's a treasure, and I shall insist upon having her with me the moment I come back. Take her, dear, and keep her for me until I come back. Otherwise I shall live in daily fear that somebody else will get her, and you know how hard it is for me to get a maid who suits. You will, won't you?

It is hard for Evelyn to keep a maid. She means to be good to them, but she keeps them at such a pitch. I didn't see how I could refuse to keep Evelyn's treasure for her.

Edward got a glimpse of Trente that night. He looked at me in the quizical way he has, which always makes me feel like a schoolgirl instead of a settled-down young matron.

"It's all right, as far as I'm concerned," he said, "because I'm immune, dear heart. But it seems to me that if I were you, and a very young and impressionable young brother was about to visit me, I shouldn't be so careless."

Stupid though it may have been, I



couldn't understand, for the moment, what he meant, and I told him so.

Edward loves to tantalize me.

"No, I suppose not," he said loftily. "I only hope that while Bob has been at West Point he has learned how to defend himself from other things than sword thrusts and dysentery. Otherwise, he'd better run the first time your new maid sets eyes on him."

"Evelyn sent her to me, and she says she's a treasure. I'm going to keep her while Evelyn is away," I retorted.

"Well, if you take my advice, you'll lay up Evelyn's treasure where moths won't corrupt nor Bob steal her," he teased.

Edward knew, just as well as I did, that Bob was wrapped up in his profession. Why, he was the solemnest young soldier, always so courteous, and at the same time *so* indifferent and *so* good looking that all the girls who knew

Edward got a glimpse of Trente that night.

him ended up by calling him conceited. He wasn't a bit, though.

Bob didn't come until later than he had intended, stopping off to visit one of his classmates. When he did arrive we had a houseful of company, and I was as flustered and flurried as Evelyn ever was, and almost as worried. The long chats with him to which I had looked forward never materialized. I didn't even know how he spent his time. He seemed to be enjoying himself, in his quiet, undemonstrative way, so I never bothered much about him.

Of Trente I saw quite a lot. She

was, as Evelyn had said, a treasure. She could do almost anything, and, in an unobtrusive way, she managed to help me a great deal. She was beautiful. I think that if I had to sum her up in one word, it would be "lissome." She wore her simple black dresses with exquisite grace.

The night before the most aspiring affair I had yet attempted, Bob knocked at my door. I had been making arrangements and deciding details all day, and I was fearfully tired. We were to give a dinner and dance, and I did want it to be a success, for Edward's sake, although he didn't care a snap. That sounds paradoxical, but it was so.

"You can come in, but you can't stay more than five minutes," I told Bob.

"You're tired, aren't you, Ruth?" he said compassionately.

I knew he had something he wanted to tell me. I felt absolutely devitalized, but I did try to arouse myself to take an interest.

Bob laughed at me.

"It's nothing at all; at least, nothing that can't wait, I guess. Run along to bed, you sleepy kitten."

The next morning was a nightmare. At noon I was tired and hot and sick, yet I knew that by night I must be—or at least look as if I were—rested and cool and happy. I do believe I would have eloped with Boggs, the butler, if he had asked me. Anything to get away.

After lunch I took a nap. It seemed an awful waste of time, but I had to. My own maid woke me at four. At six o'clock I was dressed, and I went down into the library to Edward's safe, where he insists that I shall keep my jewelry. There's an awful lot of it—all my own, with Edward's wedding and birthday presents, and all his family jewels. They're wonderful. I've told Edward I would have married him for them alone, if I had known him to be

a Bluebeard with whole closets full of murdered wives.

Edward had taught me the combination of the safe, and he and I were the only ones who had it, although, like the silly person I am, I couldn't remember it, and always kept it written on a slip of paper in my dressing-table drawer.

I turned the knob slowly, and felt the bolts fall out. I love to "feel" the combination work. Then I swung the door open. I kept almost all the jewelry in a metal box, which just fitted into an upper compartment. I reached for it, and found it was gone! I could hardly believe my senses. I felt that it must be there, that it couldn't possibly have been taken.

"It can't be gone! It *can't* be!" I said over and over to myself.

But it was.

I don't know how the suspicion began. I think it came into my mind full-fledged. I connected Trente and the missing jewelry. I recalled that I hadn't seen her all day.

The suddenness of it all made my head reel. I remember telling myself to keep cool.

"I mustn't lose my head," I kept saying, just as if I were in some danger.

It all seemed simple enough: There was no Trente—that is, no Trente who was a treasure of a maid. Evelyn's letter? A forgery—fool that I was not to have known it! And not another recommendation or identification had Trente brought me. I shut the safe and went back to my room and rang for Félice.

"Send Trente to me," I told her.

It was ten minutes before she came back.

"Trente is not in the house," she answered.

The answer came as pat as if we had been acting a play. I knew Trente wasn't in the house. I told Félice to send Boggs to me.

"When did Trente go out?" I asked him.

"I haven't seen her all day, madame. She must have gone some time last night," he answered.

"Why was I not told?" I was beginning to wonder whether Boggs wasn't a Ruffles, or Raffles, or whatever you call it, too.

"I would have told you, madame, but you were very busy, and I did not want to bother you."

Boggs bowed with the exalted humility of a Chinese mandarin. I reflected that Boggs had been with us two years; perhaps I had been hasty in suspecting him.

"Very well. That is all," I told him.

I had no idea how much the jewelry, all told, was worth; but I knew it was thousands of dollars. Then I turned cold. The other guests in the house! Was I the only loser? I prayed so with all my heart. I must, *must* tell Edward at once!

"Ask Mr. Wilmerding's man if he has returned from the city, and, if he has, have him come here, please," I told Félice, who had responded to my ring with unusual alacrity.

"Heavens!" I thought. "Do the servants suspect there's something wrong?"

Edward came as sweetly as if he hadn't had to hurry into his clothes at a rate that would have made most men fume.

"What's happened now? Have your lions all escaped, or is it the caterer who's at fault this time?" he asked.

I blurted out the whole story to him. He did look grave, especially when I spoke about the other guests; but he pulled himself together and took it quite gayly.

"Silly young person! Don't you know that if the other women had lost their jewels, you'd have heard of it before now? Why, each and every one of them has her baubles strung all over

herself by now. You're the only loser, I guess. It's a case for the Pinkertons."

"And right on the evening of our dance and dinner!"

I must have looked woebegone, for he gathered me into his arms.

"We'll just go ahead and hold it, anyhow; and you'll look sweet and adorable to me, just as you always do. And all the women will see you haven't any jewelry on, and they'll tell their husbands about it, and to-morrow the Street will hear that I've been caught in the market and forced to pawn your jewelry. We'll be ruined, Ruthie, but 'on with the dance! Let mirth be unconfined!'" And he laughed, quite merrily.

How I ever got through the evening, I don't know. Edward helped me over some places, and lots of things I did just mechanically. It seemed a nightmare of guests and jewelry. Guests everywhere and jewels everywhere. Edward rushed up to me once, to ask where Bob was.

"I don't know. He's to take the younger Miss Mills to supper," said I dully. I felt as if my brain had been taken out of my head and a gyroscope put in its place. I know my head whirled.

The dance, to which I had looked forward with such hopes, seemed to drag interminably. At last it was over. At three o'clock in the morning Edward and I sat down in the library, alone together for the first time since I had told him the jewelry had been stolen.

"Now, look here, little woman," he said to me. "You've had quite enough excitement for one day, and off you march to bed, immediately! To-morrow we'll talk it all over, if you wish. Even if worse comes to worst, I guess we'll be able to rake up a few more pretty playthings for you."

Excitement enough for one day I had had, but I was destined to have more.

For, as I sat there, relaxed and so tired that it didn't seem as if I should ever be able to move again, I heard a motor whirring in the driveway.

"Who is it, Edward?" I was startled. Overwrought as I was, the thought of any one arriving at that hour frightened me.

Edward crossed hurriedly to the window and looked down the driveway.

the library door a few moments later, still in his duster.

"This is luck!" he said joyously. "I hoped I'd find you up."

I didn't stop to hear why he hoped so.

"Oh, Bob!" I cried. "Trente is gone, and——"

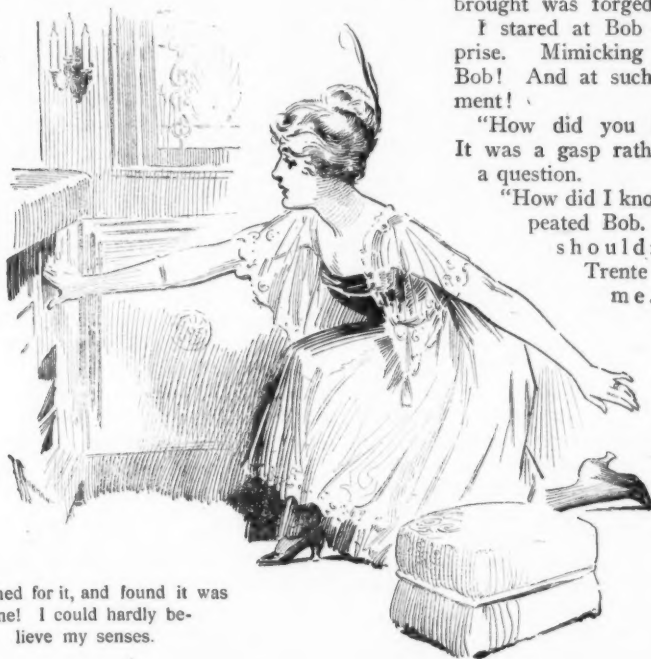
"Yes, Trente is gone; and there really never was any such person, and the letter of introduction she

brought was forged——"

I stared at Bob in surprise. Mimicking me — Bob! And at such a moment!

"How did you know?"
It was a gasp rather than a question.

"How did I know?" repeated Bob. "Why shouldn't I? Trente told me. You



I reached for it, and found it was gone! I could hardly believe my senses.

"It looks to me," said he, "as if it was one of our own machines, and I should say the tall young disturber of the dawn was your bewitching brother Bob. You didn't seem aware of the fact, Ruth, but Bob was among those missing last night. Will he ever learn to face a roomful of petticoats with any degree of equanimity?"

Bob it was. He presented himself at

see, Trente and I are married, so——"

I heard Edward cry, "Catch her, Bob!" and off I went.

The next thing I was conscious of was that somebody who seemed to my scattered senses to be all silk and chiffon and loveliness was holding a bottle of smelling salts right under my nose, and saying, "The poor dear!" over and over again. I blinked.

It was Trente.

She was kneeling on the floor beside the couch. I tried to think. I knew she was connected with the something that made Edward and Bob stand there looking so funny, but what it was didn't come back to me until she raised her hand to her face to brush aside a lock of hair. She wore a plain gold ring.

I almost shrieked. It was my mother's wedding ring. I was certain of it, for although it was like a thousand other plain gold bands, I could have picked it out from among a million.

"They've caught her," I thought, and I looked up into Edward's face.

He came to the rescue.

"Ruth, you ought to be upstairs abed, but if you feel you can stand a little bit more, I think we'd better thresh this matter out now."

I nodded feebly. I wondered if I wasn't upstairs abed, dreaming it all.

Edward turned to Bob.

"I think perhaps you'd better tell us first what you mean by saying you and Trente are married."

Bob smiled at Trente.

"Why, nothing except that I decided Trente was a rather unusual maid, and I'd better keep her in the family. I hated the thought of a church wedding, with all its fuss and feathers, so we just eloped."

Trente blushed, and interrupted him.

"It's dear of Bob to shoulder all the blame, Mrs. Wilmerding, but the fault was all mine. I couldn't resist the temptation to see if he really would run away with me, just as I was. Then, when we got started, I couldn't stop him. He just would have his own way." Trente didn't look as if she minded Bob's way very much.

"I did that," said Bob, grinning. "We were married this afternoon, in New York, and had our dinner there. Then I drove all around the countryside, waiting for Ruth's jamboree to finish, so we could catch you two alone."

Bob paused expectantly, and Trente blushed again. But all that was clear to me was that Bob had married Trente, and Trente had my mother's ring, and my jewelry had been stolen. The whole affair was too complex for my comprehension.

Edward seemed as much at sea.

"I think," he said quietly, "we'd better begin at the beginning. Did you know Trente before she came here?"

Bob shook his head.

"Never laid eyes on her."

"It seems to me that I've seen you about in one of my automobiles at night, of late, and you weren't always alone. What has become of that girl?"

"It was I," explained Trente meekly.

"I believe you said Trente forged the letter she brought here with her. Is that so?"

Bob grinned.

"I didn't mean to put it so bluntly, but it's so."

Edward always is irritated when things elude him. He was getting that way now. I saw it, though Bob didn't; and so did Trente.

"It's all my fault, Mr. Wilmerding," she said, so contritely and so prettily that I felt, if Edward didn't melt to her, he'd be just insufferable. "The whole affair was the outcome of a crazy dare."

Edward did melt, but that didn't seem to help Trente with her story. She was all confusion.

"It sounds very silly, I know. I bet a girl friend of mine I could get a position as maid and keep it all summer. You'll have to pay that bet now," she warned Bob.

Bob only grinned again. The habit seemed to be growing on him—grafted right onto his face.

"So I just wrote the letter from Evelyn myself and brought it here," she confessed naïvely. "Then Mrs. Wilmerding took me in."

Edward whistled.

"Lord deliver us from the ingenuous ingenuity of a young woman who wants to win a bet!" said he. "I wonder if you realize that if Bob hadn't married you when he did, Ruth and I might have had you sent up for forgery and Heaven only knows what other crimes."

Trente blushed. She seemed to be as much in the habit of blushing as Bob was in the habit of grinning. Edward was merciless, though.

"And why did you hit upon this unsophisticated little wife of mine as your victim, pray?"

"Why, I never thought of anybody else. I've heard Evelyn speak of you both so much, and I'd never seen either of you, and I thought it would be such a lark!" She seemed surprised and grieved that we didn't seem to think so, too.

"Do you know Evelyn?" I suppose my eyes were as round and as big as saucers.

"Why, I'm Evelyn's sister Madeline!" said Trente.

Tableaux! My head spun while

I hugged and kissed her and tried to understand it all. I heard Bob say to Edward:

"And she made me think, right up to the last moment, she was nothing but a maid. Talk about romantic young heiresses who want to be loved 'only for themselves'!"

Then I remembered.

"But my jewelry! What has become of that?"

Bob looked amazed, and Trente did, too.

Edward explained.



I was conscious that somebody was holding a bottle of smelling salts right under my nose, and saying, "The poor dear!" over and over again.

"Every bit of Ruth's jewelry has been taken from the safe here. We discovered it this afternoon, or rather yesterday afternoon, and proceeded to put two and two together, and made five of it by deciding that Trente had eloped with it instead of with you."

Trente uttered a little cry of protest. "It was foolish of us, dear! I don't see how we ever could have," I said hurriedly.

Bob seemed mightily perplexed.

"Gone! Ruth's jewelry? It can't be! It was all in the safe yesterday morning. I went to the safe and got mother's wedding ring," he explained. "I meant to ask you for it last night, Ruth, but you were so tired I thought I'd just take it and tell you about it later. I wanted Trente to have it."

"How on earth did you open the safe?" asked Edward.

"I was so stupid, he used to help me with it, at first," I explained guiltily.

"It was in the safe, every bit of it, yesterday morning," repeated Bob.

"It's gone now," said Edward.

"It can't be!"

Bob crossed the room and began on the combination. He ran through it quickly and swung the door open. Reaching down into the bottom of the safe, he pulled out my jewel box.

"But I never put it there! I always keep it up on top!" I objected.

"I must have thrown it back in a hurry, and the books fell on top of it, so you weren't to blame for not seeing it. I'm awfully sorry, Ruth," said Bob, all penitence.

Edward smiled at me, the quizzical smile that makes me feel like a school-girl, instead of a settled-down young matron.

"There's just one thing more to be said," he announced.

"What?" I asked fearfully.

"Bless you, my children!" And he turned to Bob and Madeline with outstretched arms.

Then we both went away and left them in each other's, I suspect.



THE BLIND TENANT

IS there some understanding sweet
Between him and his violets?
More rich the perfume sent to meet
His fondling hand, his cautious feet,
Than if he *saw* the plants he sets.

His vines dance in the summer breeze,
Touching his forehead with their frail,
Cool threads of lace; his budding trees
Tremble with morning symphonies
In robin time, when orchards pale;

As if the wild things and the bright,
Shy flowers would stand his friends, would show
His other senses that delight
They may not teach his darkened sight,
Which may *dream* beauty, but not know.

JEANNIE PENDLETON HALL.

Her Husband's Freedom

By Helen E. Haskell

Author of "Katrinka," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY G. W. HARTING

Two women of contrasting types and a man, but
—a most unusual presentation of the triangle.

EVELYN CAMP tucked her hand into the crook of her husband's arm and drew him toward the door.

"The car has been waiting for fifteen minutes. I must be off."

His hand, large and warm, closed over hers.

"Cut the meeting to-night, Evelyn."

"You're unreasonable, Tom."

She looked up at him with a smile; then, as if frightened by something she read in his eyes, withdrew her hand from his.

"Is it unreasonable for a man to want his wife to spend an evening quietly at home with him now and then, Evelyn?"

"When it interferes with her work."

"I'm getting jealous of your work. It absorbs too much of your time."

"I thought you had always agreed with me, Tom, that an absorbing interest outside her home was as necessary to a woman's development as to a man's?"

"That was before our marriage. I'd have agreed to anything to get you."

She eluded his arms, and gave him her hand to kiss. But his lips sought her mouth. She avoided the caress, which fell lightly upon her cheek.

"I've boasted that ours was an ideal union, Tom," she said, and moved toward the door. "Let's not slip back a hundred years and spoil it all."

"Have things your own way, sweet-

heart." He opened the door, went with her to the waiting auto, folded the rug about her knees, and stood, bareheaded, on the curb, watching until the car had disappeared from sight. Then, with a sigh, he turned and reentered the house.

In the open door of the library, he paused. It was a spacious room, with every chair, every table, and every lamp in just the right place for comfortable reading; but to-night it did not invite him. It seemed austere and cheerless. He turned from it and softly mounted the stairs to the nursery. As he opened its door, the nurse raised a warning finger.

"The baby is asleep," she whispered.

"May I have a look at him?"

"Not to-night, please. You might disturb him. I've had a struggle teaching him to go to sleep alone and in the dark."

Tom Camp conquered an impulse to mutiny against the authority of this woman to whom Evelyn had intrusted the early upbringing of their child, and went back downstairs to the library.

He found the place where he had left off in his book, but he could not read. He felt strangely miserable. He asked himself why, and flushed as his reason gave him the answer. He wanted to feel the dependence of his wife and child. As Evelyn had said, he had drifted back a hundred years.

The tinkle of the doorbell startled him out of his discontented reverie.

For a brief moment, he hoped that Evelyn had come back; then he heard the rumble of a man's voice. The maid announced Mr. James Morton and Mrs. Stillwell.

As he rose to welcome his guests, Camp realized how utterly lonely he had been. He had always considered James Morton more or less of a bore, while his daughter, Mrs. Stillwell, had made so slight an impression, upon the two or three occasions when they had met, that he would have failed to recognize her had she entered unannounced. Yet to-night he was heartily glad to see them. His greeting was almost effusive.

While shaking hands with Mrs. Stillwell, he observed that she wore black, and recalled having heard Evelyn say that she had lost her husband and had come home to live with her father.

As she settled herself in the chair beneath the pedestal lamp, she expressed regret over Evelyn's absence.

"However, we hardly expected to find her," she went on, pulling off her gloves. "I can't understand how a woman can get through with all the important work she does in a day and ever be at home. You must be very proud of your wife, Mr. Camp."

She opened her bag, and drew from it a half completed muffler and a ball of gray wool.

"Your wife is the most capable woman I know, Camp," chimed in James Morton.

Tom Camp looked pleased. He liked to hear Evelyn praised.

"Now, there's Anne." James Morton beamed at his daughter affectionately. "Her maximum achievement is a muffler a week."

"And if it wasn't for the muffler, I shouldn't accomplish anything," laughed Mrs. Stillwell, arranging the groups of stitches along her knitting needles.

Camp watched her, remarking to

himself that, in spite of her mourning, she suggested gayety and young life, the somberness of her weeds throwing into relief the willfulness of her blond hair and the cornflower coloring of a pair of eyes that gazed gently from beneath fair, crescent-shaped brows.

Her stitches arranged and counted, she began to knit, taking no part in the conversation, but seeming content to listen. Presently Camp discovered that she did not do that, for when, alive to his duty as host, he attempted to draw her into the discussion, she laughingly admitted that her thoughts had been woolgathering.

Her voice and laugh, as she made the acknowledgment, stirred Camp curiously. He fancied that Mrs. Stillwell's daydreams were but instincts toward tenderness. He felt a desire to share them.

It was some time after ten when Camp's guests bade him good night, yet he did not go at once to bed. He returned to the library and stretched himself in the big chair beneath the lamp. But he was no longer lonely. Something elusive, like the fragrance of far-off flowers, still suggested Anne Stillwell.

It was strange, he mused, how comfortable and cheerful the quiet presence of this woman, knitting, had made the evening. She had hardly spoken, and yet there had not been a moment when he had been unconscious of her nearness.

II.

It was not until the next evening that Camp again saw his wife. She shook her head in playful sympathy when he told her that James Morton and his daughter had called.

"Mrs. Stillwell admires you tremendously," he added.

Evelyn had long ago mentally cubbyholed Anne Stillwell as a woman who



did not matter. Now she dismissed her with a word:

"Indeed?"

A little later, the chairman of the committee on public playgrounds called to see Evelyn. They had been about to go into the sun porch for coffee. Evelyn signaled the maid to serve it in the dining room, dismissed her, poured a single cup, and herself carried it around the table to her husband.

"I'll get rid of him early," she said, resting her hand on his shoulder.

He reached up and covered her fingers. She withdrew them instantly, stepping out of reach as he rose from the table. Camp opened the dining-room door. On its threshold his wife paused.

"As soon as this bill is passed, we'll take a holiday together," she said.

A feeling of depression settled over Camp as he went back to his coffee. He finished it, then got up and went outside to smoke, strolling leisurely toward the lake.

On the threshold his wife paused. "As soon as this bill is passed, we'll take a holiday together," she said.

For a block he walked slowly—aimlessly, he believed—yet when he reached the corner, he turned north unhesitatingly, at the same time increasing his pace and squaring his shoulders.

Very soon he found himself in sight of James Morton's place, a big, old-

fashioned dwelling, surrounded by a grove of butternut trees. These had already begun to shed their foliage, and the lawn was carpeted with dry leaves.

As Camp approached, Anne Stillwell and a child emerged from a clump of shrubbery. Her skirts were gathered up in her hands, and the leaves surged about her ankles like brown foam. She was flushed, laughing, and evidently unconscious of his nearness.

Yielding to an impulse, Camp vaulted the hedge that inclosed the lawn. Mrs. Stillwell saw him, dropped her skirts, and made an ineffectual attempt to smooth back her hair.

"It's—it's Mr. Camp," she stammered, as he approached. "Good evening."

Her eyes were luminous. A dimple came and went at the corner of her mouth. Camp, looking down at her, was conscious of an unexplainable quickening of his pulse. In the pink glow of the dying day, she seemed to him to stand for life—the kind of life that recognizes no duty more compelling than living.

"Dorothy and I were 'playing pretend,'" she explained, in a hurried way. "Father is inside."

"But you are out here," returned Camp, "and I like playing pretend."

"Then you'll be the father!" cried Dorothy. "These leaves are water."

Mrs. Stillwell, who was looking at Camp, dropped her eyes, blushing furiously. When she spoke, it was to the child:

"This is Mr. Camp, Dorothy. He'll play with you now. Mother will watch from the piazza."

As she turned away, Camp's impulse was to follow her. He restrained it, but stood staring after her vapidly.

"Night will catch you, if you don't hurry!" she called over her shoulder as she mounted the steps.

Camp gripped the child's hand, and together they raced around the house.

Later, they went inside. Mrs. Stillwell brought smoking things for Camp and her father, then settled into a deep couch at the end of the room. Dorothy climbed into her lap, sitting with her cheek resting against her mother's bosom; and, as on the evening before, a feeling of warmth and well-being stole over Camp. He listened to Morton, even roused himself now and then to argument, but he talked from the surface of his mind, conscious all the time of some strange, thrillingly sweet undercurrent of feeling that could find no expression in words.

It was not until Mrs. Stillwell rose, and murmured something about its being Dorothy's bedtime, that he recalled Evelyn's promise to get rid of the committeeman early.

Then his departure was delayed, for Dorothy made a lengthy process of bidding her grandfather good night, and when she had finished, ran to Camp with outstretched arms. He felt a strange tug at his heartstrings as he picked her up and held her close while she kissed his forehead and the tip of his chin. Then he set her down and turned to Mrs. Stillwell. The feeling that had swept him still shone in his face as he held out his hand. When he spoke, his voice was husky.

"Good night," he said.

"Good night," she replied, resting her fingers in his.

"Thank you," he murmured, then flushed. He had no reason to thank Mrs. Stillwell. She had merely wished him good night; but her eyes had flashed a look of understanding into his—tender, thrilling, in its sympathy.

The next moment their hands had fallen apart and she had turned away.

Camp was never afterward able to recall whether or not he had presence of mind to wish James Morton a decent good night. For in that second of leave-taking, while his eyes and Anne Stillwell's held, a momentous thing had

happened. Camp could not explain it. He only knew that the spark had been struck, that he had fallen in love, as it seemed to him, irrevocably, head over heels, and with a woman to whom he had never spoken a hundred words.

As he turned into his own gate, he had an impulse to talk the thing over with his wife. In this moment, he thought of her as a cool, level-headed friend. Like a swimmer who finds himself swept unexpectedly into a strange, swift-moving current, his desire was to strike out for the tranquil water he knew.

He ran up the steps, thrust his key into the lock, and stepped into the hall. Voices from the library told him that the committeeman had not yet gone.

During the fortnight that followed, Camp saw Anne Stillwell only twice. Upon these occasions she seemed shyer and more tongue-tied than ever, but her mere presence in the same room with him was electrical, and he left her, dazed, almost giddy, to walk the streets aimlessly, trying to figure out the thing that had happened to him.

But the acuteness of his mental faculties seemed blurred. He could get no farther than the realization that he wanted a certain woman, that all his thoughts focused at the point where he was to see her again; and he knew that she, too, wanted him. Nothing had ever happened to give him cause for his belief—that is, nothing that he could put his finger on—and yet—he *knew*! And life was no longer dull. It was full of glowing possibilities.

There were times when he felt that it was his duty to talk the matter over with his wife; but there were difficulties in the way. How was he to explain to Evelyn that the naïve shyness, the childishness, the softness, of Anne Stillwell were the qualities that endeared her to him? These were the very qualities that Evelyn scorned. Much as he

longed to be frank with her, he resolved to keep his secret, for a time at least.

Camp had just come to this decision when Anne Stillwell went away. James Morton met him on the street and informed him of her departure, quite casually, speaking lightly of how empty the house seemed without Dorothy and her mother, and urging the younger man to drop in often.

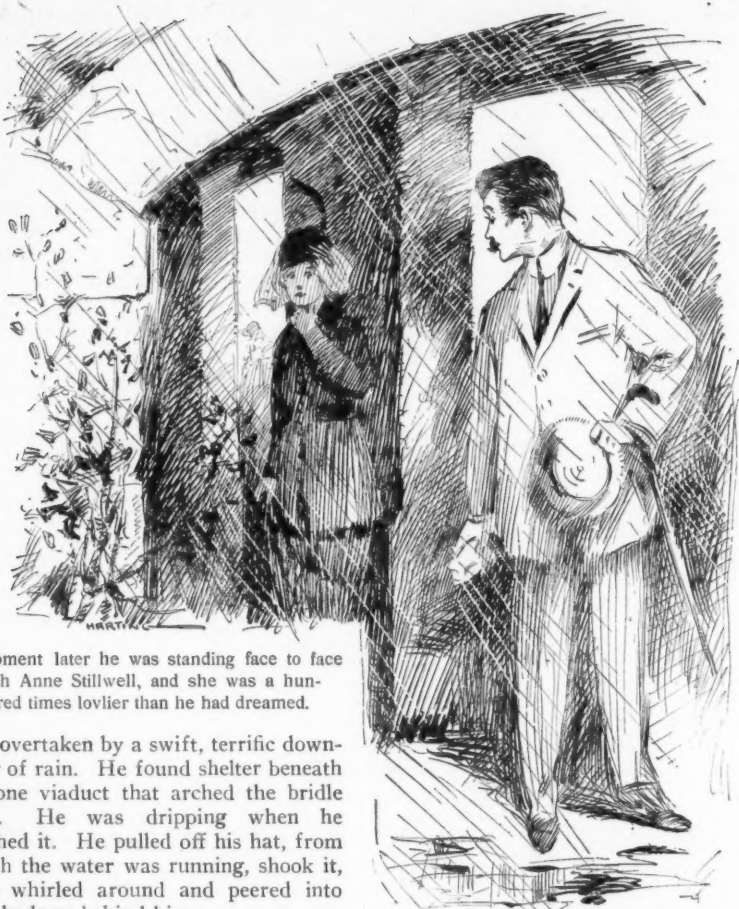
The news was a shock to Camp. For the rest of the day he combated the desire to go South in pursuit of Mrs. Stillwell, but finally made up his mind to remain where he was. A few months' separation would either cure him or prove the genuineness of his passion.

III.

It was the middle of March before Mrs. Stillwell returned. Then she kept out of Camp's sight—purposely, he suspected. He dropped in at Morton's a dozen or more times during the next four weeks without encountering her. Several times he asked for her, only to be told that she was either "lying down" or "out."

During these visits, although Camp saw nothing of her mother, he had great romps with Dorothy, who had a way of popping into the room a moment after his arrival and remaining until one of the maids came and carried her off to bed. He grew to be very fond of her, and even tried telling himself that it was on her account that he spent so many evenings at Morton's. But all the time the image of Anne Stillwell persisted at the back of his mind, although of late it seemed less an image than an impression of soft outlines, of warmth and yielding tenderness. He no longer visualized her; he merely felt her.

And then, one day late in April, he came upon her unexpectedly in the park. He had started for the yacht basin, where he kept his sloop, when he



A moment later he was standing face to face with Anne Stillwell, and she was a hundred times lovelier than he had dreamed.

was overtaken by a swift, terrific down-pour of rain. He found shelter beneath a stone viaduct that arched the bridge path. He was dripping when he reached it. He pulled off his hat, from which the water was running, shook it, then whirled around and peered into the shadows behind him.

A moment later he was standing face to face with Anne Stillwell. She was crouched against one of the big stone pillars, her veil thrown back from her face. She looked little and soft and frightened, and she was a hundred times lovelier than he had dreamed.

"You!" he exclaimed.

She nodded, and pressed her hand against her throat.

It was a strange greeting to pass between a man and woman who had met

less than half a dozen times, yet neither of them found it so. Which showed how thoroughly they understood.

Camp had spoken a single word, but in it he had accused and triumphed in a breath; had accused the woman of avoiding him, had triumphed in finding her here, trapped, caught by the storm, compelled to remain and listen.

In response, she had merely nodded; but in that nod she had acknowledged his accusation, and at the same time

yielded to a fate that was stronger than her will.

For a full half minute they stood facing each other, tense, silent. Then Anne Stillwell's lips parted.

"It—it's a terrible downpour," she said, with a catch in her breath.

"Terrible!"

"Do you think it will last?" breathlessly.

"It's too violent."

The need of speech to relieve the tension was his as well as hers. It didn't at all matter what was said. They were both struggling for balance; and meantime their eyes held, his face so close to hers that his breath stirred her hair, while the consciousness went hammering through his veins that at last he was near enough to this woman to reach out and touch her, crush her, if he would.

Then, suddenly as it had begun, the rain, having done all the damage that was possible, stopped.

It was like the breaking of a suffocating bond. Anne Stillwell stepped at once into the open.

"It's all over, Mr. Camp," she said, in a quick, choked voice.

"All over, Anne?"

He was unconscious that he had called Mrs. Stillwell by her first name, but she flushed. As he had spoken it, the word had been like a caress.

"Yes; and father will be worried. I must hurry home. Good-by!"

"Good-by!" returned Camp.

He made no effort to detain her. He simply stood in the shadow of the viaduct and watched her out of sight.

IV.

It was the next evening that Evelyn Camp, coming home from a meeting of the Free Kindergarten Association, was told that Mrs. Stillwell was waiting for her in the library. The announcement irked Evelyn. Seeing Anne Stillwell

meant a mental drop. For a moment she was tempted to be excused on the plea of fatigue. Then, recollecting that Tom spent many evenings with James Morton, she decided to be gracious to Morton's daughter.

"You were good to wait for me," she said cordially, as she entered the library and crossed to where the other woman was sitting.

Mrs. Stillwell rose, held out her hand, gave Evelyn a fluttering glance, and dropped her eyes.

"I wanted very much to see you, Mrs. Camp. Father and I are going away, and I was anxious to—talk with you."

Evelyn remarked that Mrs. Stillwell seemed disturbed, and kindly, a trifle patronizingly, she attempted to set her caller at ease. She inquired interestedly about the proposed trip, and expressed surprise when she learned it was to take in California and, later on, the Philippines.

"Tom will miss you," she added lightly.

Anne Stillwell swallowed.

"Yes, that's why I came. I wanted to speak of that. He's grown accustomed to seeing a good deal of father and of Dorothy. He and she have wonderful times together."

"He and Dorothy?"

"Yes. She is my little girl. They're great pals."

"But she is a mere baby!"

"She's four years old. I've let her stay up until after her usual bedtime to see him. They—they romp together and invent games. Now that we are going away, it occurred to me that he would miss her."

"I'm sure he will," said Evelyn Camp kindly.

"And it's spring," went on Anne Stillwell. "Everything is bursting into bloom. The birds are mating, and—oh, everything is so wonderful!"

Evelyn Camp's eyebrows went up

wonderingly. What was the woman trying to tell her? She could not discover the least sequence between spring and Tom and the going away of James Morton and his family.

"It's the most beautiful season of the year," she said coolly. "Don't you regret running away from it?"

Mrs. Stillwell moistened her lips and fingered the clasp of her reticule.

"It—it's the only thing to do under the circumstances."

She spoke in a half whisper, and Evelyn noticed that the corners of her mouth twitched. Possibly she was ill. Evelyn decided to ring for tea, but as she reached for the bell, Anne Stillwell stopped her with a gesture.

"I can't stop for tea, Mrs. Camp," she said; and now her eyes, great blue wells of pleading, were fixed on Evelyn Camp's face. "I must get through with what I came to say, and then I must go. It's going to be difficult, and, I'm afraid, disagreeable. I've thought and thought of it, and to-day I decided to talk it over with you—make you understand, if I could, just what I fear for—for Mr. Camp and for you."

Her hands were winding and unwinding a wisp of a handkerchief. Two red spots blazed on her cheeks.

"I'm going away, Mrs. Camp, but there are other women; and, as I have said, it is spring. There's romance in the air. The evenings are long and sweet. Some men would find diversion at their clubs, and there are others who might go lightly from one woman to another, and nothing serious would come of it."

Evelyn Camp's face reflected her astonishment.

"You're not making yourself quite clear, Mrs. Stillwell," she said coldly.

"I was afraid I shouldn't." Mrs. Stillwell paused, her eyes fixed pleadingly on the face of the woman opposite. "I merely came to say that I'm

going away, and that Mr. Camp will miss me."

Evelyn Camp sat forward in her chair. In spite of herself, her upper lip had a slightly scornful lift.

"Are you trying to tell me, Mrs. Stillwell, that my husband is in danger of falling in love with you, and that you are running away in order to save both him and me pain?" she asked, in the voice she would have used in speaking to a bashful child.

Anne Stillwell shook her head.

"No, it isn't exactly that, Mrs. Camp. Your husband is not in love with me. I—I've figured it out in the past six months, but I'm afraid it's going to be difficult to make you understand because you have removed yourself so far from—from emotional things. It's the potential motherhood in a woman that appeals to Mr. Camp. It's *woman* with him, not women."

"That hints of wantonness," said Evelyn, with a movement of the shoulders that was almost a shrug.

"No, no!" exclaimed Mrs. Stillwell. "Mr. Camp is not wanton! He loves a—a home, and woman because, somehow, she stands for it."

Evelyn Camp leaned back in her chair. She had an inclination to laugh. The woman was naïve, but it was evident that she took herself seriously.

"You seem to have forgotten that the man whom we have been discussing has been my husband for five years, that our marriage has been rather unusually successful," she said. "Until this evening, nobody has hinted that I neglect my home."

Her eyes swept the exquisitely ordered room. Anne Stillwell's gaze followed hers, the color in her face gradually deepening and spreading until it submerged the white of her brow and temples.

"Your home is very lovely, Mrs. Camp," she said softly; "but when I spoke, just now, I meant the heart of



"Look at what, Anne?" asked Camp bewilderedly. "At those two old people and their son. That—that is a family, the most sacred thing in the world!"

the home, not the externals. You—you are a very much better housekeeper than I—than most women; but it's something more than housekeeping that men like Mr. Camp need. It's love and children——"

"We think we have a rather fine boy, Mrs. Stillwell," and now Evelyn Camp's voice was cold, each word cut out crisply.

"I know," agreed Anne Stillwell. "You have a wonderful baby. I—I've seen him; but he and his father are strangers——" She paused, threw out her hand supplicatingly. "Oh, Mrs. Camp, forgive me if I seem impertinent! I realize how stupid and ordinary and plain I am, compared to you. I know of the big, important things that you accomplish—but I wonder if you are giving the proper value to some of

the little, everyday things that make life worth living?" Her shyness had been swept away before a tide of feeling. "Mrs. Camp, if you don't permit your husband to shower his tenderness upon you and your baby, it—it will be given elsewhere. That's what I came to say to you. There are women who would take it, and—dreadful results would follow. Your home might be broken up. You might lose your husband forever!"

A moment before, Evelyn Camp had been disposed to dismiss the subject with a shrug. But suddenly, moved by the speaker's earnestness, she decided to discuss it, to make her own position clear.

"You say that I am in danger of losing my husband?" she began.

Anne Stillwell nodded.

"Yes. Men like Mr. Camp are ruled by their hearts. He might imagine himself in love with some other woman because she seemed more dependent, more in need of cherishing and of—of service. He might even ask for his freedom——"

Evelyn interrupted her.

"You say that my husband might ask for his freedom?" she repeated. "That shows how little you understand the relations that exist between him and me. He has absolute freedom now. Freedom is a thing that one human being has no right to exact from another. Law cannot compel love, Mrs. Stillwell. If the companionship of another woman were necessary to my husband's happiness, I should be the last person to stand in the way of his going to her. Marriage on any other basis is slavery. My husband is as free to-day as he ever was, and so am I. We discussed the question before we married, and decided that a wedding ceremony should be binding only as long as both parties concerned desired it to be so. After that it should be as easily dissolved as the bonds in any other partnership. Have I made my attitude toward marriage clear?"

Anne Stillwell nodded slowly. Her eyes, which had darkened and deepened in the past few moments, were fixed strangely upon Evelyn Camp's face. Her lips were moist and very pink.

"You mean, Mrs. Camp," she said wonderingly, "that you would not mind a divorce? Nor—nor the loss of your husband's love?"

"That is not the question. I mean that, in the event of his preferring another woman to me, he would be free to form a new partnership. Now let me ring for tea."

Anne Stillwell shook her head.

"Thank you, Mrs. Camp, but I've stayed too long already. I—I must go."

As she rose, she swayed a trifle, and

rested her fingers on the edge of the table to steady herself. In the lamp-light, her face seemed to shine radiantly through the mist of her thin black veil.

A moment later, the door having closed upon her guest, Evelyn Camp went upstairs. She felt unaccountably tired. She unfastened her gown and slipped into a negligee. Then her thoughts turned to Anne Stillwell. Should she tell Tom of the woman's call and of their talk? She was uncertain whether it would amuse or annoy him. Probably the latter.

She sat down before her dressing table; then rose, and restlessly walked the length of the room and back again. Anne Stillwell's call had disturbed her, awakened strange doubts. For the first time in months, she found herself looking forward impatiently to her husband's return. She glanced at the clock. It was seven—her child's bedtime, and she had not seen him since morning. She would go up at once.

A moment later she entered the nursery, and, for the first time since his birth, took entire charge of her two-year-old boy.

V.

Meantime, Anne Stillwell was walking swiftly toward home. She felt radiantly young, in tune with all the throbbing secrets of the spring.

She smiled as a boy and girl, lingering in the shadows at the corner, started at her approach, then, with arms linked, turned down a side street, walking slowly, his head leaning toward hers. Her eyes followed them. Love was abroad, busy with matings. She felt the tremor of it. A fresh, wonderful joy pulsed through her. Last night she had made up her mind to run away, but now there was no need of it. Evelyn Camp had said that her husband was free to give his heart where he would—and he had already given it.

Yesterday, while they had stood face

to face in the shelter of the viaduct, his eyes had unveiled their secret, suddenly, almost ruthlessly. How heart-rendingly dear the revelation had been to her she had intended that he should never know.

But now everything had changed. Tom Camp was free. His wife—that beautiful, cold shell of a woman—had said so. He was free, and they—

"Mrs. Stillwell!"

She stopped. It did not surprise her to find Tom Camp looming above her. "Oh!"

His hand caught her elbow, drawing her arm against his side. She lifted her face. He drew her arm closer. Their pace slackened.

"I caught sight of you half a block away, and raced after you."

Ordinary words, such as always passed between these two, their meaning drowned in the clamor of that inarticulate language of the feelings that rushed through them like a flood.

And now his hand slid along her forearm and clasped her wrist. Her shoulder nestled into his. They walked on, more and more slowly.

"Sweet—sweetheart!"

The night palpitated with the whispered words. His head bent lower.

Then out of the shadows ahead of them emerged three people, an elderly woman and two men. One of the men was slightly bent. His walking stick tapped the sidewalk with the regularity of a clock's tick. His mustache and imperial were white. The other man was an upright, handsome youth in the early twenties.

At sight of these three, Anne Stillwell withdrew her arm from Camp's. After they had passed, he reached for it again. For a moment she yielded it, then stopped abruptly, at the same time releasing her arm.

"It—it isn't true! Nothing your wife can say will make it true!" she said, in a constrained voice.

Tom Camp looked down at her, astonished at the sudden change in her mood.

"It isn't true?" he repeated. "What isn't true?"

She tried to answer, but the words caught in her throat.

"Mrs. Stillwell—Anne! What is it? What have I done?"

She seized his arm and turned him around.

"Look!" she whispered, pointing down the street.

"Look at what, Anne?" asked Camp bewilderedly.

"At those two old people and their son. That—that is a family, the most sacred thing in the world! Theories like Evelyn's and like yours can't make it less sacred. It stands for everything that is sweet and good and civilized." She shook her head and moved a step away from him. "For a little while I forgot. I believed what your wife said because I—I wanted to believe it. But neither her saying it, nor my believing it, alters the fact. You and Evelyn and your child are a family, an inseparable unit. You belong to each other. The three of you make one. Something higher and stronger than words have forged the bond."

A quiver ran over her. She held out her hand; then, before he had time to take it, drew it back.

"I shall not see you again," she said. "Good night—and good-by!"

The next moment she was gone.

Camp stood looking after her. His heart was racing. The effect of her nearness had left him giddy. She had been so adorably sweet in the brief moment of her yielding, before those ethical doubts had chilled her. His impulse was to hurry after her, pick her up in his arms, and kiss away her scruples. But she was already out of sight. She would be home before he could overtake her.

Perhaps it was as well, he mused.



Tom Camp stood in the doorway, watching the two in silence.

There were things to be talked over with Evelyn. He would go home and get that done with. There would be no unpleasantness. He and Evelyn had anticipated just such a crisis. Both had agreed that if a time ever came when their bonds chafed, they should be severed. He recalled how fearful he had been that Evelyn would some time find them irksome. He had scoffed at the possibility of his finding them so. Yet to-night all that he wanted of his wife was his release. The mas-

culine instinct was demanding a mate. It was man calling to woman, and Evelyn Camp had submerged sex beneath what she considered the bigger things of life.

Reaching home, Camp went at once to his wife's sitting room. Not finding her, he rang for a maid.

"Mrs. Camp is in the nursery," the girl explained. "She asked me to tell you. She's putting Master Tom to bed."

Camp hesitated, undecided whether to go to Evelyn at once or to wait. But it was almost dinner time. There would be no chance to talk with her at table, and afterward she would probably have callers; and he was impatient to get through with the thing. Every moment away from Anne Stillwell now was torture.

He ran upstairs, opened the door of the nursery softly, then paused. Evelyn, her dark hair loosened, a peculiarly tender expression on her face, was just buttoning their child into his sleeping clothes.

Tom Camp stood in the doorway, watching the two in silence, while the luminous look in his eyes crept back behind the iris. Then something inside of

him seemed to snap, loosing him from Anne Stillwell, setting her forever beyond his reach. His mind still pictured her as sweet, infinitely desirable, something he should always long for and never have.

This woman and this boy separated him from her. They were a part of him, the three of them making what Anne Stillwell had called an inseparable unit, a family.

His wife glanced at him, smiled, and beckoned him to enter.

He crossed the room and stopped at her side. She looked up at him, her eyes shining with a softer radiance than usual. He rested his hand lightly upon her shoulder. Again she glanced up, and this time her attention was arrested by some indescribable change in his face. His features seemed to have hardened since she had last seen him. He seemed strange to her, coldly remote. She reached up and took his hand, holding its palm against her cheek.

"I think we are both beginning to feel the need of our holiday," she said.

"Yes," he agreed, "but we've waited rather long for it."

The lack of enthusiasm in his voice brought Evelyn to her feet. For a moment she stood with the child pressed against her shoulder, her eyes searching her husband's face. Then a quivering sigh swept her.

"Take your boy, Tom," she whispered. "He'll help, and——" She paused, swept her arm toward the window. "It's spring."

They crossed the room, and, side by side, stood looking out into the moonlight night.

On a bench across the park, sat Anne Stillwell. Her shoulders drooped, and her thin veil glistened with the tears she felt too tired to wipe away.



"THEN YOU'LL REMEMBER ME"

IF I must live and tread another way,

It must be kismet, fate must then be borne.
Then do not ask me to recall the day

We wakened in the freshly sweetened morn
And saw each other's eyes and knew the truth,

When we had love and fire and potent force
To thrill our racing hearts, when we had youth,
And youth and love and fire were at their source.

If I must live a life apart from you,

I must not think adown the years to when
The golden gauze that was your hair once blew
Across my love-flushed face, and in my ken
Existed nothing in the spring-filled world

But two red lips and sparkling eyes and cheeks
In which the roses came and went, and purled
Your laughter with the music love bespeaks.

If I must live, and it is written that

Our paths are not to cross, I must forget
The love that I discovered as we sat

Once in a velvet night, the night we met
Beneath the stars. I must not now recall

The first long kiss, the scent of violet
That brings you back; I must forget it all.

Please God, if I must live, let me forget!

LYON MEARSON.

Ostracized

CHAPTERS I. to XI.

Liddy Fitzenberger, a girl of eighteen, living with her father and her step-mother in the Pennsylvania-Dutch village of Virginsburg, has grown up in a curious state of isolation. Something in the past of Mr. Fitzenberger and his second wife—Liddy does not know what—has resulted in their ostracism by the village, and Liddy, innocent as she is, is included in the ban. Her father, a well-to-do retired tanner, moves through life as devoid of emotion, apparently, as a wooden automaton, paying no more attention to Liddy than if she did not exist; and his wife, while lavishing endearments upon her husband, is positively hostile to his daughter. Liddy's few timid attempts to solve the mystery that hangs over the household are futile. A picture, found in a trunk in the attic, of a sad-faced young woman, with a child at either side and a baby in her lap, is Liddy's only clew to the past, and cut off as she is from all human intercourse, she has no way of learning the fate of her mother and the other children. Into this lonely life comes a great joy in the shape of a friendship with the son of a neighboring farmer, Elmer Wagenhorst, a young man of intelligence and native refinement, who is attracted to Liddy first by her beauty and then by her mental qualities, for in her solitude she has thought and read more than most girls of her age. Elmer is to enter college in the fall, and for fear of imperiling his chance of an education he does not dare arouse his father's anger by openly avowing his friendship for Liddy. She agrees to meet him secretly, though she instinctively feels that there is something ignoble in his conduct. She has the same instinctive sense of revulsion when Elmer, upon his departure, arranges for a clandestine correspondence. Her loneliness after Elmer leaves is heightened by her fear that he may advance so far beyond her that he will no longer find her companionable. Spurred on by this dread, she ventures to ask her father for permission to take lessons of the Lutheran clergyman, Mr. Armstrong, and obtains his indifferent consent, in spite of her stepmother's opposition. Her visit to the Armstrongs is an event in her life, for it is the first time within her memory that she has entered any house in the village other than her own. Young Mr. Armstrong and his wife, newcomers in the neighborhood, welcome her warmly, and readily accept her as a pupil, showing only amusement at her conscientious warning that a friendship with her may harm them with the villagers. The Armstrongs are as much of a puzzle to their Pennsylvania-Dutch parishioners as the latter are to them. Well-born, cultured, traveled, blessed with ample means, and so independent of the hitherto omnipotent church council, they display a lack of concern for public opinion that staggers Virginsburg. Their efforts to inspire the conservative little community with progressive ideas meet for the most part with stolid indifference or open hostility, Mr. Wagenhorst being one of their bitterest opponents. In Liddy, however, they find a kindred soul, and under the influence of their friendship and instruction, she rapidly blossoms into a beautiful and charming young woman. She tries to learn from Mrs. Armstrong, as she had once from Elmer, the secret of her family's ostracism, but Mrs. Armstrong, like Elmer, shrinks from telling her.

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Ostracized

By Helen R. Martin

Author of "Tillie, a Mennonite Maid," "Barnabetta," "For a Mess of Pottage," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

The story of a girl who was ostracized, but whose ability and force of character turned a tragedy into a triumph.

CHAPTER XI.

FOUR months' absence from his home had wrought greater changes in Elmer than Liddy could have imagined possible. In the first place, he *looked* so very different. Almost the first thing she noticed about him was that his hands had become nearly as smooth and white as Mr. Armstrong's; next, that his face was not now red from sunburn, and that its expression had grown rather keenly intelligent; that his clothes and hair had a look of "style" unlike anything in Virginsburg; that his bearing and manner were less awkward, more easy and assured; and that, on the whole, he seemed much less "common" than when he had left home.

"Indeed, Elmer, you look nearly like an Allentowner, so well your clothes fit you and such nice-looking shoes you wear. And kid gloves, yet—I mean, too!"

"Yes; I don't leave—let—my father see my kid gloves," he laughed.

They were in an alcove of the public library in Allentown, seated together in a wide, low window sill, entirely hidden from view. Liddy was beaming upon him with an excited delight in her expressive face; and his eyes, resting upon her, glowed with a fire she had never seen in them before.

"And you, Liddy, are not the same," he said, his gaze searching her face with an almost greedy keenness.

"I know I'm not quite the same, Elmer," she replied gravely. "I guess in looks, too, I am a little changed, the same as you are—for Mrs. Armstrong tells me how to fix my hair and—and what's the style, you know."

"You do look awfully refined, Liddy. You could pass off for 'most anybody. I mean," he tried to explain, "judging by your appearance, you might be even one of the college professors' daughters! And your face—you don't look so melancholy and lonesome as you used to always, as far back as I can remember you, even when you were a little bit of a girl."

"I'm not lonesome any more." She smiled.

"I ought to be glad for you that you have these friends—these Armstrongs—but I'm such a selfish beast, I can't be glad for something that makes you miss *me* less."

But, though he did look a bit jealous, he spoke with a complacent self-confidence that showed how little he really doubted his ascendancy. Elmer would have considered a man a cad—if that word had been in his vocabulary—who would have presumed to patronize Liddy; yet in his inmost consciousness he had always rather patted himself on the head for his own large-minded condescension in being kind to one with whom no one else in his native town would associate, and for his perspicacity in recognizing her transcend-

ent worth as others had been too dull to do.

"You were my best friend, Elmer," Liddy reassured him. "I feel as if no one else could ever be to me what you are."

"You'd better mean that, Liddy!" He laughed, a repressed joy and triumph in his tone. "I'm not *going* to take second place with you, understand, now that you've got these other friends."

"Don't you see, Elmer, that I couldn't be as close to two married people as I am to you, who have no one but me that is really very near to you?"

"Of course you couldn't—I know that. I just couldn't stand it, Liddy, to have you think more of some one else. You're prettier than you ever were. I hadn't thought of you these four months back as so pretty as you are."

"I'm glad I'm so pretty."

Elmer laughed.

"And I'm glad these Armstrongs haven't taught you to tell lies."

Liddy looked shocked.

"Why, they're the best people I ever knew! They're——"

"To pretend, I mean, the way most people do. The higher up people are, the less honest and sincere they are—so it looks to *me*, anyhow. I always did think it was so cute the way you'd say right out what you thought."

"Have you met many high people, Elmer?"

"Not so many; and not so high, I guess. But enough to know that plain sincerity is scarce. I'd hate to have you lose *yours*, Liddy."

"I can see, Elmer, how your language has improved," Liddy remarked. "Do you notice that mine has, too? Mrs. Armstrong takes great pains with it."

"Yes, but if it was anybody but you, I'd say you were putting on. It doesn't sound familiar to me. But it's right pretty."

"Wait until you hear Mr. and Mrs.

Armstrong talk! They come from Virginia."

"You ought to hear my father run 'em down!" Elmer said, shaking his head ruefully. "He's furious because he hasn't been able to get them put out of the church. It certainly is a joke on that Lutheran church council that they've got a preacher for once that isn't dependent for his bread and butter on *them*!"

"Elmer?"

"What, Liddy?"

"Is your father down on the Armstrongs because of—of me?"

"It's that pamphlet the minister put out—that 'common stock' that got the whole village so excited. Isn't it ridiculous? I tried to tell pop—father—what it meant. But you might as well talk to a stone wall."

"But didn't your father say," persisted Liddy anxiously, "that the people were down on the Armstrongs on account of *me*, too?"

"Oh, he dragged that in. It's of course on a level with their fussing about the pamphlet."

"To think," said Liddy, her lips quivering, "that no one can even be my friend without suffering for it!"

"And rejoicing in it!" said Elmer, taking her hand and holding it in both his own.

"But how you'd have to suffer if your father knew, Elmer!"

"I realize more than ever how I can't go on much longer molding my life after the ideas of a man like my father," said Elmer, with stern resolution, clasping Liddy's hand between his own.

"It seems so odd, Elmer, to see you look so strong and manly, while your hands feel so soft and smooth! My hand feels like a grater against yours—as it does, too, against Mr. Armstrong's."

"What! That man don't sit and hold

your hand, and he married and a minister?" cried Elmer indignantly.

"No—but he shakes hands with me when I go for my lessons."

"That's altogether unnecessary! Especially when you go as often as three times a week!" Elmer stoutly maintained.

"But ministers always shake hands more than other people. And he's a wonderfully polite man, Elmer—even to his own wife, yet—I don't mean 'yet.'"

"Pop—my father—says he's a dude. But then"—Elmer smiled—"he calls *me* one now, because my hands aren't rough and red. He's ashamed of my hands."

"I wish mine were white and smooth, too, like Mrs. Armstrong's."

Elmer shook his head.

"It may look nice, Liddy, but it means a woman's no good. A wife ought surely to do better by her husband than that Mrs. Armstrong does—from all I hear. A wife's work is to make a home for her husband, and she can't do it and keep her hands unspoiled," he added contemptuously.

"Mrs. Armstrong does."

"Why, Sally says she shirks her work so that the minister has to *keep a hired girl* for her! And only the two of them in the family!"

Elmer's tone was shocked, for Virginsburg had never known anything like it.

"She makes the most perfect home life for her husband, Elmer, that I ever—read about. You see, I don't know anything about homes except from what I read."

"But it's not Mrs. Armstrong, but the hired girl, that does the work, isn't it? Or what does she keep her for?" asked Elmer, genuinely puzzled. "Putting her husband to such expense as that!"

"I've learned, Elmer, that making a home means something more than do-

ing the rough drudgery of a house. One might do that very thoroughly and yet be very far from making a home."

"Of course I know that. A woman ought to be kind and pleasant, too, like my mother, and not worry a man. But she can't make a home for him *without* doing the drudgery."

This, Liddy knew, of course, was the Pennsylvania-Dutch view of woman's economic value. But she had learned, also, Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong's view. She did not feel prepared to discuss the question with Elmer, so she did not contradict him.

"Liddy," he said authoritatively, "I won't stand having these people put false notions into your head and spoiling you. I don't want *you* to get like Mrs. Armstrong!"

Liddy laughed.

"Wait until you see her, Elmer, and you'll see how far I am from being like her. She's been all over the world—she's been to boarding school and college. She has always, until she came here, gone with high people—I mean with—*ladies*."

"Ladies?" repeated Elmer, the word having to him no meaning other than a sex designation.

"Aristocratic ladies, I mean—what we call high people here— Mrs. Armstrong says I mustn't say 'high' people."

"It's a wonder she'd be satisfied to stay *here*, then," said Elmer skeptically, "if she was used to so much."

"She says she likes Virginsburg."

"Likes it? Well, it doesn't like her."

"That's its loss, not hers."

"You do think a lot of her, don't you?" Elmer said, a bit jealously, though curiously.

"I have good reason to."

"Liddy," said Elmer earnestly, "don't you fool yourself about these people. If they're such aristocrats, then they're only *patronizing* you—they don't really look on you as a *friend*. That's what

makes the Virginsburg people so mad—the way these Armstrongs want to 'uplift' them. As if they *needed* it!" He laughed. "They can't stand being patronized by their would-be superiors, Liddy—and I don't much blame them. I'd like to see those Armstrongs trying it on *me*! And, Liddy, I'd think you'd feel the same."

"I'm only too thankful to be 'uplifted'—to have any one take an interest in me!" Liddy warmly returned, a hint of tears in her voice.

"But, Liddy," returned Elmer gently, "you ought to have your pride, too, that feels yourself as good as anybody."

"I? In Virginsburg?"

Elmer winced.

"I didn't think. To be sure, it is some different with you, Liddy—dear."

Because of his rearing, rather than of his temperament, terms of endearment did not come easily or naturally to Elmer. Never in his life had he heard them used.

Liddy did not answer at once. She drew her hand from his to straighten her hat, and for a moment looked thoughtfully out of the window by which they sat.

"Elmer," she said at last—and he thought, with a tingling of his nerves, what a thrilling sweetness there was in her voice—"I can't help thinking it is a great pity that you haven't the advantage, along with your chance to study college textbooks, of mingling with people like the Armstrongs—with ladies and gentlemen."

Elmer flushed.

"By 'ladies and gentlemen' you mean high people, I suppose? You think my *manners* ain't good enough?" he demanded, for he had learned that there *was* such a thing as manners, though it was certainly a shock to have his need of them pointed out by little Liddy Fitzenberger, who had never been away from home—pointed out to *him*, who

had been for four months at a first-class college.

"I didn't mean your manners, Elmer, but your ideas. I know, now, that association with ladies and gentlemen would educate you faster than textbooks can do. Mingling with people that have lived differently from us helps us to see that the ideas we've been raised up on may possibly be all wrong. Elmer," she said, turning very bright eyes to his, "I don't believe any one is ready to *begin* to be educated until he questions everything he was raised to believe."

Elmer gazed at her thoughtfully.

"Sometimes, Liddy, you do speak as if you were nearly inspired. That's certainly true, what you say."

"And you'll realize it even more when you see the Armstrongs."

"But I can't meet them, Liddy. My father won't let any of us speak to them."

"Oh, but, Elmer, they want you and me to come there together some evening," Liddy pleaded, looking greatly disappointed.

"Liddy! You haven't told them about you and me?" he exclaimed, in consternation.

"Don't be alarmed, Elmer—our secret is perfectly safe with them. No, I didn't tell them—they guessed it."

"But how could they, or any one, 'guess' it if you kept it to yourself, Liddy—as you promised you would?"

"It was when I got your letter about the excitement in Virginsburg over their teaching me. I went straight up to the parsonage to ask them about it—I hadn't known of it at all until you wrote to me about it. *They* hadn't told me how every one was fighting them about it. Well, they asked me how I had learned of it, and they reminded me that I had told them I never talked to a soul in the town. So I said it was from a letter I had learned of the trouble they were having over me.



Elmer turned curtly to perform the ceremony of introduction. "I make you acquainted with Miss—Berger." And to Liddy: "I make you acquainted with Mr. Kichline."

Then Mrs. Armstrong teased me and said she knew it must be a—a *beau*—a 'lover,' she called it," added Liddy, blushing. "So I told her no, it was just a friend. And then she guessed it was Mr. Wagenhorst's son that she knew was away at college. But, Elmer, she and Mr. Armstrong both promised not to let it out for *anything*."

Elmer shook his head.

"A secret is not safe when four people know it. I'm sorry you told them."

"Then, Elmer," said Liddy, her voice very quiet, "we must no longer meet. I'm not willing to make you so uncom-

fortable and to make you run risks of your father's anger."

"No longer meet!" he cried, again capturing her hand and holding it. "As if I could stand that! As if I haven't counted the minutes until I could be with you again! There's no use talking about our giving each other up, for we can't! Now that I see you again, I know more than ever how I want you. I don't know how I've stood all these months without you. I don't know how I'm going to stand," he added, his voice sinking, "the parting from you again."

But all the same," he obstinately reiterated, "I'm sorry that any one but you and me knows about it."

"But since they do, there's no reason why you shouldn't spend an evening at the parsonage, is there? It seems, Elmer, that until you meet these friends of mine, you can't know *me* quite as you used to and as I want you to."

"No," said Elmer firmly, "I guess I feel like the rest of the Virginsburgers—I don't care to be patronized by folks that think themselves above me."

"Well, of course, they *are* above us, Elmer, and we know it and they know it. But they are the only people I have ever known in my life who haven't tried to make me *feel* I was beneath them."

Again Elmer winced. Liddy certainly could administer slaps that were "sidewinders."

"If they're above *you*," he suddenly said, his face flushing, as he looked straight into her eyes, "they must be 'some'!"

"They are above me, and they are 'some.' So won't you come to see them with me? It would give us one extra chance to be together, you know, Elmer."

"A chance I don't care for. It's only when we're alone, Liddy, that we are really together. Even in this library, with people passing back and forth and the possibility always hanging over us of being seen by some one that knows us, I can't take the pleasure in being with you that I'd have if we were off in the woods the way we used to be last summer. So," he concluded, "I won't go to the parsonage."

Liddy had learned to recognize, in a certain set of Elmer's mouth, so like his father's, the uselessness, at times, of either argument or pleading. Just now, she saw how futile it would be to urge him any further. She was, therefore, silent.

"What's more," he continued, "it wouldn't be as safe at the parsonage

as it is here, even. Suppose some other people came in while I was there?"

"Of course Mrs. Armstrong didn't mean to risk that. She was going to entertain us upstairs in the study. She had even planned to have us come on the cook's evening out."

"Why is she so interested in helping us?" Elmer asked suspiciously. "Is it that she and the minister hate my father so they want to spite him?"

"Oh, Elmer!" said Liddy, a note of pain in her voice that brought a deeper flush to his face.

"Well, Liddy, if you knew the world as well as I know it," he defended himself, "you wouldn't believe anybody was kind just for the fun of it—without some ax to grind. I don't mean that people deliberately plot to be kind in order to gain some end. But let the object of their kindness prove a little presuming, or unappreciative, or annoying, and see how quickly they shake him or her off! I do believe, from what I see, that the only disinterested kindness in this world is a mother's, or that of a very weak, foolish person. Yes, I'm a little cynical, I guess, Liddy. I couldn't be very easily taken in."

"You'd better try to overcome that, Elmer—being 'cynical.' It's bad for you."

"You'd think"—he smiled—"you were talking about the measles—the way you say it."

"So, then, you won't go to Mrs. Armstrong's?"

He shook his head.

"No, Liddy."

His real reason for declining the invitation he did not give to Liddy at all; he was, indeed, scarcely conscious of it. The fact was that the bare thought of sitting under the critical inspection of people such as she had described—traveled, experienced, cultured, or, as his family had described them, wealthy, would-be superior, "airy," "affected," entirely indifferent to and independent

of the village disapproval of them—made Elmer turn cold with shyness and constraint. While his four months away from home had given him a new self-assurance with his own people, it had made him much more uncertain of himself as to those outside his experience than he had ever been before. And he was far too great an egoist voluntarily to place himself in a position where he was not sure that he could do himself credit.

"Look here, Liddy," he said, with only apparent irrelevancy. "I'm going to *make* something of myself in this world. I've seen enough already to know what it is to be a nobody. A person might as well be dead. I'm going to be a *somebody*—you'll see! And by a somebody I mean I'll be at the very top."

"Have you decided yet what profession you'll follow, Elmer?"

"No, but I've got my eyes open, I can tell you. I'm looking well before I make up my mind."

"Have you discovered that you have any special talent?"

"The professors say," he replied modestly, "that I've got an all-round, good brain for anything I take up. Although I'm a freshman, I'm doing sophomore Latin and mathematics, and by studying next summer I'll be able to be a junior next year."

"Oh, Elmer, that's splendid, isn't it?"

"Yes; my father is well pleased that I can get through a year sooner."

"I should think he'd be so proud of you!"

"It seems to make our Sally feel pretty sore, though," Elmer added ruefully, almost sorrowfully. "She feels it so that she, being the oldest, isn't given any chance for an education. She broke down and cried at the table before all of us, the day I got home and was telling about my studies."

"Poor Sally!" said Liddy wonderingly. "You know, Elmer, your father

won't even leave her—let her—attend Mr. Armstrong's literature classes Thursday evenings at the parsonage."

"It does seem to me," said Elmer doubtfully, "that it would be a waste of time for her; for if she never marries, she'll spend her time helping my parents; and if she does marry, what will she want of literature? To be sure, I know there's pleasure and interest in study apart from its use; and I, for my part, would be for letting her do it if she wants to. I don't think parents have a right to hamper grown children like that, even if they do support them," he maintained. "It seems to me like taking a pretty mean advantage—though perhaps my views on this matter are a little *too* liberal. Do *you* attend the Thursday literature class, Liddy?"

"No, Elmer—for the reason that my attending it would break up the class," Liddy returned calmly.

Elmer looked at her searchingly.

"Liddy," he said, "it's wonderful the way you can rise above this thing, as if you were entirely outside of it!"

"Mrs. Armstrong is teaching me to do that, Elmer."

Elmer had an uncomfortable feeling that it would have been pleasanter to hear that *he*, instead of Mrs. Armstrong, was the inspiration to such spiritual heights.

But before he could reply, they were both startled by the sudden appearance, just at the entrance of the alcove, of a man Elmer knew well—the principal of the Hamburg High School, under whom, two years before, our rising young man had been graduated with the highest honors.

CHAPTER XII.

"Why, Elmer, is this you, once?" the teacher, a rather good-looking young man of about thirty, cordially greeted his ex-pupil, as he came into the alcove and held out his hand.

Confused and alarmed as Elmer was at this unexpected and dangerous exigency, he did not miss the fact that Mr. Kichline, as he shook hands, was looking, not at him, but at Liddy's flushed, pretty face under her jaunty black velvet toque. Mr. Kichline was known to have a weakness for pretty girls.

"Does he know her by sight?" Elmer fearfully wondered.

Of course every one in Hamburg knew the Fitzenberger story, but if Kichline had never before seen Liddy—as his unrecognizing, though ardent, gaze would seem to indicate—this precarious situation might even yet be saved.

"Well, Elmer, how does college go, then?" asked the teacher sociably, his eyes steadily on Liddy.

Mr. Kichline's four years' training at the Kutztown Normal School and his five years' training in Pennsylvania-Dutch villages had not eliminated, but emphasized, his provincial accent and speech.

"It goes fine," replied Elmer, trying, quite ineffectually, to conceal his perturbation.

"You're looking grand," said Mr. Kichline, still gazing at Liddy.

"Yes, I'm fine and dandy. How are you?"

"I'm nothing extra. I'm not anything so well. Boarding at the Hamburg hotel don't agree with me very good. I'm thinking I'll have to get married," he added jocularly, his gaze inviting Liddy's appreciation of the joke.

"So you're in Allentown to-day," said Elmer, hardly knowing, in his apprehension, what he was saying.

"Yes, I come by the car over. The hotel carriage is broken down with boarders—they used it so hard."

"If you have to catch the four-o'clock car," Elmer warned him, "you'll have to hurry."

"No, I'll take the five-o'clock one, for if I hurry, it gets me all around. I'll go out on the same car with you and your lady friend, if she goes out alone, too; does she?"

"No. It looks a little for rain, don't it?" Elmer said hurriedly, his face growing redder every minute as he realized Mr. Kichline's determination to be introduced to Liddy.

"But it reads in the paper that the weather won't be inclement," returned Mr. Kichline. "Won't you make me acquainted with your lady friend, Elmer? Or," he added facetiously, "do you have afraid I'll cut you out?"

Elmer, his hand thus forced, turned curtly to perform the ceremony of introduction.

"I make you acquainted with Miss—Berger." And to Liddy: "I make you acquainted with Mr. Kichline."

"Pleased to make your acquaintance, Miss—Berger," Mr. Kichline responded eagerly; while Liddy, very pale, did not speak as she let him take her hand.

"Are you a townier, Miss Berger?"

"No."

"You have the appearance of being one—though I didn't ever hear that Elmer was acquainted any in town. If you live handy to Hamburg, I'd be pleased to call to see you Saturdays, if I dare."

"By the way," Elmer broke in, "I mind one day last summer, when I saw you, Mr. Kichline, you spoke about your views on the women voting. How did the election suit you?"

"It suited me all right. I'm wery much opposed against leaving the women vote."

"Why?" asked Liddy; and Elmer, who could not meet her eye, was surprised at the unfaltering tone of her voice.

"She certainly is game!" he thought remorsefully and **not** without shame.

"Well, you see," said Mr. Kichline, "I read in the papers, once, how some

ladies in Kansas were arrested for selling their votes. Now I would not wish that our ladies in Pennsylvania be laid open to criminal charges. That would be fierce."

But Liddy's little gurgle of amusement, showing her dazzling teeth against her red lips, was too much for Mr. Kichline's earnest convictions.

"If you ast me to wote for suffrage, though," he instantly declared, "I'd do it *whatever* my opinions on it. Dare I call on you Saturdays?"

"It's a wonder, Mr. Kichline," Elmer again interposed, "you'd stick so long to the Hamburg school. It's a wonder you wouldn't try to better yourself."

"Elmer," said Mr. Kichline gravely, "don't you mind what your class motto was when you grad-yated—wove in a floral *de-sign* over the stage? 'Build for character, not for fame.' That's my motto in life, Elmer, and I am satisfied to stay where I am, so long as it seems good for my moral character, and so long as I am useful. I hope that you, too, Elmer, have made your class motto your *life motto*—'Build for character, not for fame.' I always try to make our high-school commencements," he added earnestly, "an occasion for *sowing seeds of thoughts*."

"Well," retorted Elmer, "I'm building for *success*—which includes character, of course. It includes fame sometimes, and sometimes it don't. I've not got anything against fame."

"Character," said Mr. Kichline ponderously, "is the important thing. If I take notice to a weakness in the character of one of my pupils, I always try to build up and strengthen that weakness. Does your lady friend live handy to Hamburg, Elmer?"

"No, sir. What do you think of the war, Mr. Kichline?"

"Well, Elmer, I don't read about it. I don't like it. I wisht it would quit."

"Huh!" grunted Elmer. "It's history, isn't it? You teach history."

"Yes, but I don't like this war, so I don't read about it. Would you mind giving me your address, Miss Berger?"

"She's a stranger here," said Elmer. "How's old Brunner, your assistant?"

"Och, he handed in his resignation last spring, a'ready. He has dropsy so bad he has no pants he can wear any more."

"That so?"

"Yes, indeed. When do you go back to college, Elmer?"

"In two weeks."

"You missed a lively time in Wirginsburg this fall—ain't?—with their new preacher working everything up! There is still very much fight over him, ain't? Over his neighborhood association, and over him and her taking up with the Fitzenbergers and all."

Elmer's face turned as white as Liddy's.

"I hate gossip," he coldly retorted. "Leave the minister and his wife manage their own affairs as they please—and make what *friends* they please."

"Yes, well, but a minister oughtn't to fly so in the face of what his congregation thinks as to associate with folks like the Fitzenbergers. That's going *too far*."

"By the way"—Elmer, turning to Liddy, abruptly terminated the impossible conversation—"we'll have to start right away to catch your Philadelphia train. Come! Good-by, Mr. Kichline."

And before the teacher could recover from his astonishment, Elmer had drawn Liddy out from the alcove and was publicly escorting her the length of the library, jumping, he knew, from frying pan into fire in being thus seen with her openly by many people, even though they *were* fifteen miles from Virginsburg.

She, however, hurried ahead of him so swiftly that he almost had to run to keep up with her. To his credit be it said, his predominant feeling at this



"Well, did the lady go back to Phil-delphy, or is she still hangin' round Allentown fur to meet up with you in the lib'ry now and ag'in?" demanded Mr. Wagenhorst.

moment was distress for her, rather than apprehension for himself, though the latter sentiment was not weak.

"Liddy!" He caught up with her and stopped her as she fairly rushed into the vestibule. "Oh, Liddy, dear!" He seized her hands, drew her close, and held her to his heart. "I wish I could carry you off to the other end of the world. It's so awful to stand by and see you insulted and hurt."

But she forced herself away from his clasp and turned to the outer door.

"No, Liddy!" He sprang after her. "Listen to me!" he begged, drawing her back into the vestibule, for it was safer there than in the street—and even in a moment so tense as this, Elmer did not forget to be prudent. "Don't go away cross at me, Liddy!"

She leaned against the door limply, indifferently.

"Don't you see, Liddy," he argued, holding her arm to prevent her escap-

ing him, "that I wouldn't be helping you—only ruining your chances and mine for happiness in the end—if I came out openly *now* and tried to protect you from these fools?"

"Yes, of course I see it, Elmer. Let me go, please," she said wearily. "It's getting late. I must get the next car."

"Meet me on Cemetery Hill at nine to-morrow night. Promise!" he passionately demanded.

"I go to Mr. Armstrong for my lessons to-morrow night. *Please* let go my arm, Elmer."

"You're so white, Liddy. Tell me that you don't lay it up against me that I have to act toward you so cowardly. I hate it worse than you do. If you knew how I long for the day when I will be free to claim you——"

"You're talking nonsense, Elmer. Let me go!"

"When will we meet again—and where?"

"Never again. We'll write to each other. That's all we can do."

"No! I must see you! Put off your lesson at the parsonage."

"I can't do that."

"Why not?"

"My lessons are too important to me."

"For my sake, won't you put it off this once?"

She slowly shook her head.

He looked at her dubiously; in view of what had just occurred, he had not the pluck to press his request.

"Then will you meet me on Wednesday night on Cemetery Hill?"

"I don't know—I'd rather not."

"I'll be there. You come to me, Liddy," he said, in a tone of command that was yet ardent and pleading. "I don't see how I can stand waiting until Wednesday night to see you again."

"It's a long, cold walk, Elmer, to Cemetery Hill, and you'd be angry if you went so far and I wasn't there. Don't go. Give it up. Let's not try to meet, but just write to each other."

"I'll be there—and so will you! You *must* be there! Wear your heaviest clothing. I'll build a bonfire. Liddy," he exclaimed, his face tense with the conflicting emotions of his mind, "I want you every hour, every minute—I want you always! I want to hear your voice and see you smile and hear you laugh and feel the touch of your hand and——"

But she broke away from him and fled. His devotion to her—so real and strong, yet so selfish and calculating—left her bewildered, sore, battered. She did not know how to cope with it. She only knew that to be a constant source of mortification and dread to one she loved was a rôle she could not endure.

It seemed to her, during her long, tedious trolley ride home that day, that never before had she so keenly realized the tragedy of her ostracism. What

a wonderful thing love would be—such love as she now saw Elmer felt for her—if not handicapped by this shame and fear he seemed always to feel about their friendship! What deep and glorious happiness could be theirs if they could love freely and openly! And she, innocent of offense to any living being, was to go through life without love! Even Mrs. Armstrong thought a man would have to be reckless to marry her! And, though Mr. Armstrong's answer to his wife's probing as to whether any man's love would be equal to the endurance of Liddy's tragedy had been an unqualified scorn of a love that *couldn't* rise above it, yet Mrs. Armstrong had added the disquieting observation that her husband was the one man she knew who yearned to suffer martyrdom for his ideals.

"I have no wish to have any one suffer martyrdom for me," thought Liddy, grief and despair in her soul, as she sat alone in the car, gazing out into the gathering darkness of the short winter day. "I must make up my mind that love is not for me."

She recalled Mrs. Armstrong's warning—the truth of which she was beginning to realize as she thought of the look on Elmer's face while his eyes had rested on her to-day—that it was dangerous for a man and a woman to love if they could not marry.

"I must break away from Elmer. It's a bad thing for him that I ever came into his life. I don't believe we ought even to write to each other. I must give him up. I must give him up if it breaks my heart and his!"

She knew well that, had her position and Elmer's been reversed and *he* living under a cloud of shame, it would have been her glory to sacrifice herself for him.

"I am like Mr. Armstrong. I'd enjoy being a martyr for an ideal!"

But Elmer, she knew, was of a different caliber.

"It's the only thing in which I feel I don't understand Elmer. I can't think how it must be to love any one and feel afraid and ashamed of it. To love any one and yet not want to protect them from hurt and wrong! No, that is something I can't imagine!"

She dropped her face into her hands and tried to see the long, empty years before her without Elmer—without the dear companionship that had come to be her whole life. Was she strong enough—for Elmer's own good, and a little, also, for her own pride and self-respect—to give it all up?

The end of her journey found the question still hanging fire; her heart refused to answer it.

CHAPTER XIII.

Elmer was not surprised when, at dinner two days later, his father opened up a conversation with him, for he had been expecting it:

"Are you going to Allentown over, this after [afternoon] to study your college branches?"

"Yes, sir."

He had told his father, on the day of his return from Collegeville, that he would be obliged to work three afternoons a week in the Allentown public library, and Mr. Wagenhorst had consented to supply the necessary twenty-five cents car fare. So, although Elmer's object in this scheme was now frustrated, since he and Liddy would not dare to meet there again, he would, nevertheless, have to keep up the study pretense and take the trip to the city. The studying, however, was not wholly pretense, for, his Pennsylvania-German conscience not permitting him to lie when it could be avoided, he had, on his first visit to the library, put in the time, while waiting in the alcove for Liddy to join him, in reading a few chapters of John Stewart Mills' "On the Subjection of Women."

"When I spare you from home," said Mr. Wagenhorst, "and pay your car fare, yet, you don't have dare to waste your time. Al Franz tol' me how last night he was at Hamburg up and seen Kichline, and Kichline should have sayed he seen you in the Allentown lib'ry in company of a Phil-delpy lady that you took to the train home."

"No," said Elmer composedly. "I only took her to the door of the library."

"So? And how did you ever meet up with a Phil-delpy lady?"

"Several of our college coeds are from Philadelphia."

"Coeds? What's that, again?"

"Women college students."

"Huh!" grunted Mr. Wagenhorst, with a side glance at Sally's sullen face across the table. "What is this here coed doin' in Allentown?"

"She didn't say."

"Is she mebbly visitin' in there so's that she can chase after *you*?" his father persisted.

"She didn't tell me so."

A roar of laughter from the younger boys—even Mrs. Wagenhorst and Sally smiling a little, and Mr. Wagenhorst grinning reluctantly—greeted this jaunty rejoinder, the Wagenhorst sense of humor being primitive.

"Well, did the lady go back to Phil-delpy, or is she still hangin' round Allentown fur to meet up with you in the lib'ry now and ag'in?" demanded Mr. Wagenhorst.

"I don't know where she went when she left the library," Elmer truthfully answered. "It wasn't any of *my* business. I didn't go in there to the library to meet a lady from Philadelphia."

"You'd better *not* be gettin' time and money off of me fur no sich purpose!" said his father. "What," he added, with a cunning that was perfectly obvious to the keener intelligence of his son, "was the lady's name?"

"Miss Berger," answered Elmer, surmising at once that his father had heard

the pseudonym by which poor little Liddy had been "made acquainted" with Kichline and was trying to trip up his son in a lie. Elmer's familiarity with his father's clumsy methods of family government made it easy to circumvent them.

"Berger? Huh! It sounds too much like '*Fitzenberger*' to please me!" retorted Mr. Wagenhorst.

Elmer laughed.

"Sally," he said, turning to his sister at his side, "another cup of coffee."

Sally rose to wait upon her brother, as was her wont.

"Pop"—Elmer had learned to be ashamed of the epithet "pop," but had not the courage to brave the astonishment and amusement of the family by addressing the head of the house as "father"—"the more I see of coeducation, the less I favor it."

"But what is it, then—this here 'co-education'?"

"Males and females educated together on an equality. It's all right up to high-school commencement. After that, the education of the two sexes ought to be on different lines," said Elmer dogmatically.

"Well, I guess, anyhow!" Mr. Wagenhorst heartily agreed, thrown off the track of his son's amours, as Elmer had intended he should be.

But our young man knew from bitter experience that when once his father "smelled a rat," he would not rest in peace until he had run the rat to its hole—had found convincing proof either to rout or to confirm his dark suspicions.

"He'll find some way of spying on me in there at the library," Elmer thought. "And won't he get fooled this time!"

Elmer would never forget the several occasions in his boyhood when he had been hounded down to the uncovering of what he had thought his very well-concealed tracks—and the dread-

fully severe retribution that had followed.

"I wonder mom could stand it when pop would thrash us boys the way he did," he marveled.

He himself found it unendurable to look on and see his little brother Johnny severely punished, and he always shielded him when he could do so with safety to himself.

"My children shall not grow up in such fear and reserve!" he resolved. "It's hell!"

That afternoon, as he sat reading in the Allentown library—not in an alcove, but conspicuously in the main room—he kept his eye "peeled" to see whom his father would have spying on him. No one, however, as far as he could see, turned up; and it was not until he had boarded a car to go home that he saw, a moment afterward, his father himself come into the car.

Elmer promptly drew off his kid gloves and thrust them into his pocket.

"Pop's methods are certainly thorough!" he reflected, despair in his heart as he thought of Liddy, whom he would see that night on Cemetery Hill—for he would not entertain a doubt of her coming to him there.

Elmer knew that, if he had not been on the lookout for his father this afternoon, he never would have seen him, so stealthily had the old man come into the car behind some other passengers, and at such a cautious distance from his son did he seat himself.

"He doesn't want me to know just yet that he's watching me. That means he'll track me up again on Friday. He'll likely send Sally to town on an errand and give her money for a movie if she'll promise to report what she sees. She'll go to the movie—but she wouldn't blow on me if she did see me with a girl."

But on second thought, he was not so sure that if Sally should ever see

him with *Liddy Fitzenberger*, she *could* keep quiet.

"She'd think that was the limit. She'd be so ashamed, she'd want to have it stopped even if she did have to get pop on the job."

Ever since his parting from Liddy on Monday afternoon, Elmer had known, with mingled ecstasy and misery, that he loved her—loved her with his soul, his mind, his body. She possessed him utterly.

"The question is," he told himself, revolving the matter ceaselessly in his mind, "do I love my ambitions more? *Could* I marry her? Surely *not*, unless I could take her far from here where she's known. And that's what I *will* do—for I can't live without her. I want her! I love her! Gosh, but I love her!"

At supper that night, his father, stupidly unsuspecting of Elmer's knowledge of his afternoon's espionage, rallied him again on the subject of the girl from "Phil-delphy."

"Well, did you see your 'coed,' or whatever, this after?"

"No, sir."

"Do you think, then, she's went back to Phil-delphy?"

"I haven't received any cablegram from her to that effect."

The family shouted with unaccustomed laughter. It was as good as "a comic movie" to hear Elmer "answer up to pop so funny."

"*What*, now, did you tell me her name was?" his father continued, to try to trip him up.

"Berger. Don't you know you said it was too much like *Fitzenberger* for your taste?"

This bold rebuttal would, Elmer knew, effectually kill any suspicion his father possibly had as to the identity of "Miss Berger."

"Kichline tol' Al Franz she was a stylish townner, all right," continued Mr. Wagenhorst. "Them townners knows so

good how to rope a fellah in, you better watch out! Anyhow, I don't want fur you to go runnin' with a girl till you're settled all right and earnin' your own livin'."

"Aw, pop, there isn't a girl in all Philadelphia that I'd lift my eyes from a book to look at."

"I'm glad to hear it. Time enough fur girls when you're through college and settled. And I'd warn you, anyhow, against a town girl. Better make up to some e-conomical, hard-working country girl, and not to an extravagant, good-for-nothing, city high flyer that spends a man's money and don't earn her wittles—like Reverend Armstrong's married to. Mebby *he* wouldn't be so bad, neither, if it wasn't fur the wife he's got to discourage him so. To be sure, a man's a awful weak fool to *leave* a woman spend his money and live in idleness. I'd make her behave herself if I had to trounce her. Use your judgment when you pick out a wife, and then you'll have the peaceful life I had, a'ready, with mom. I never had to speak a cross word, hardly."

Elmer stole a surreptitious glance at his mother's placid face, and fell to wondering, as he had often done, what was her real self, her real life, beneath that inarticulate mask she wore.

"Pop cares for her more than for anything on this earth, but I can't see that he ever sacrificed anything for her."

As for his mother's feeling toward his father, it was a mystery to him.

"She never shows a sign of affection for him. But if she doesn't love him, why does she give her whole life to humoring and coddling him? How can a woman give herself so entirely to a man as mom does if she doesn't love him? Is it just a woman's nature to do that way?"

But Elmer was destined to learn, one day, that it wasn't the twentieth-century woman's nature to "do that way."

He felt the more secure in risking his meeting with Liddy that night because of his father's evidently allayed suspicions as to the public-library contraptions.

His impatience to start for the trysting place made the long hours of waiting until nine o'clock drag insufferably. As the time drew near, he began to have agonies of doubt lest Liddy should fail him and not come.

"I couldn't stand it! I'd go to her house!" he declared to himself, when at last he was trudging along the country road toward the woods.

But he knew in his heart that, whatever his suffering and longing, he would not risk going to Liddy's house.

It was just nine o'clock when he reached their rendezvous. Liddy had not yet arrived. He gathered sticks and dead leaves and built a fire to light her up the dark hill and to warm her when she got there.

Half past nine came, and no sound of approaching footsteps had yet reached his ear, strained to catch the faintest distant stir on the path up the hill. Pacing back and forth, quivering with eagerness and suspense, Elmer waited, his hope growing fainter, his yearning more insistent every moment. Was something keeping her? Or had she really meant what she had said about their giving each other up? Did she feel less than he did the impossibility of that? He could understand, of course, that her pride was wounded by his refusing before Kichline to acknowledge his friendship with her; such a thing certainly did make friendship difficult. But wasn't it harder for him? Didn't she have less to overlook in him than he had in her?

"It does seem to me it's the least she can do—to help me shield myself from pop's anger!"

He contemplated the prospect of returning at the end of two weeks to college without having again seen Liddy,

and he knew that he could not endure it.

"I told her so positively that I'd be here and that she should meet me, it's a wonder she'd go against what I asked her—sweet as I've always thought her disposition!" he marveled, as he became more and more sure that she would not turn up to-night. "How would that go in marriage—her acting that independent of what I want? If, indeed, we ever do marry!"

He was so used to the tame and tasteless acquiescence of his mother in the will of his father that any other relation in marriage seemed to him anarchistic.

When at last, at half past ten, he had to give up hope of the joy of meeting Liddy that night, he wondered, as he sadly extinguished the fire, *how* he would manage to communicate with her to insist on her meeting him.

He had just turned to start down the hill for home, revolving this difficult problem, when, by the light of the dying embers of his bonfire, he spied something that during all his long vigil had escaped him. A white paper tacked to a tree, on the side away from his fire, fluttered in a little breeze that had risen. Elmer sprang upon it, seized it, and by the light of his electric lamp read it greedily.

He noticed at once that Liddy had taken the precaution—in the possible, though unlikely, circumstance of the note's being found by another than himself—to omit names.

DEAR: I can't meet you here to-night, or anywhere ever again. Of course, it does seem a dreadful waste to give up a thing so precious to you and me as this friendship we have had, for reasons that can never—so it seems to me—measure up to the value of what we lose—to give up a real thing for a shadow. But I know a man must make his way in the world, and he can't do it when weighted down with fear and shame. And no woman with a spark of spirit would be willing to be the cause of such fear and shame to her friend—or her husband.



Mrs. A. has told me how dangerous it is for two people who cannot marry to love each other. She says it's especially dangerous for a man. So, now that I know that we do love each other, yet can't marry, I am sure we ought to part and try to forget each other. You will succeed in forgetting me, I am sure. Mrs. A. says men love harder at first than women do, but they always get over it. She says men are natural bigamists. For your own peace and happiness and *success*, dear friend, I hope you will get over it—I mean, I'm *trying* to hope so.

I know that in all the novels I've ever read, a girl doesn't ever tell a man that she loves him and that she knows he loves her before he first speaks of it. But I don't see why. I am not ashamed of it that I love you. I *would* be ashamed to let you spoil your life on account of me. That would be a burden that I feel I could not carry through life. So, dear, good-by.

Elmer held the letter to his lips, crushed it to his throbbing heart. Her hands had touched it! These dear words had come from her fair soul! Give her up? Be ashamed of loving a girl like this, whose beauty of spirit rivaled her body's loveliness?

The moment was an exalted one to Elmer. He lifted his eyes to the tops of the tall trees that raised their heads to the stars all about him, and there, under the clear heavens, he registered a vow—that he would never, never give up this only real, this only blessed thing that life had ever brought to him—Liddy's love.

CHAPTER XIV.

It was on the very morning after Liddy had confided to Mrs. Armstrong that Elmer refused to meet her at the parsonage, and that she had decided that their relation was so precarious for him that it must not be allowed to continue; and Mrs. Armstrong, in spite of the girl's white, suffering face, had, in view of all the circumstances, commended her resolution to "break it off"—it was on the very next morning after this strenuous conversation between the two young women that Elmer mailed

a confidential note to the minister's wife, asking her to arrange for Liddy and him a secret meeting at her home for that same evening. If it would not be convenient for her that night, or if she failed to persuade Liddy to come, he preferred that she should not write to him, as letters were unsafe. He would just take his chances and come to the parsonage at nine o'clock—to the kitchen door.

"I am certainly impressed with the young man's *caution*," Mrs. Armstrong remarked to her husband, when they had together read Elmer's letter.

"Be fair to him. I am impressed, rather, with his love for the girl—so great that he guards against every risk of its being discovered and frustrated. For once his father discovered it—tableaux! Father and son aggressively facing each other—'One of us has got to die!'"

"You're very charitable to him, I think. Well, I'll send for Liddy and persuade her that, after all, she'd better see him. I can't resist his appeal. He's mad about her. And this is at least a *safe* place for them to meet. It was dreadfully wrong, their meeting alone in the woods late at night, the way they've so often done."

"Yes, that was wrong—a mere child like Liddy!"

"Have you seen Elmer Wagenhorst since he came home, Billy?"

"At the post office, yes. He's a splendid-looking fellow. Has a strong, intellectual face. Crude and countrified looking, of course."

"Of course."

"But he looks as if he'd get somewhere in life."

"Do you think, Billy, that I *ought* to get Liddy here to-night?"

"At least let her see his note. It's for her, not you, my dear, to decide whether she'll come."

And so it came to pass that Liddy

and Elmer met that night alone in the minister's study.

"I am such a weak creature!" Liddy ruefully declared, as they sat together on the couch that stood at right angles to the open fire. "I struggled so manfully with myself before I got up the resolution to write you that note, Elmer. And now it will all have to be gone through with again—for, Elmer, can't you *see* that we must drop all this?"

"No, Liddy! I love you too much to give you up! I would give my life for you——"

"Not your little finger would you give for me, Elmer, dear," Liddy said, slowly shaking her head. "Not your little finger!"

"*Why* do you say that? What have I ever done to make you think that?"

"I feel it rather than think it. Because you are you."

"Listen to me, Liddy. I love you. No other woman could ever be anything to me after *you*. With all the strength that is in me, I mean to work for a place in life where I can be free to take you to my side in defiance of everybody and everything that would come between us. My love will spur on my ambition. I ask you now, this night, to become engaged to me secretly—that we may be promised lovers from now on until I am free to marry you."

Liddy, knowing him as she did, recognized with fatal clearness his own sense of his great condescension and magnanimity in offering to marry her.

"Elmer," she said earnestly, "let's just imagine ourselves married and living far away, where no one knew anything about me. You would live in daily and hourly dread of some one's turning up who knew my history. You'd be conscious always of how you had sacrificed your peace of mind for me, and you'd hold me your debtor for it. I couldn't endure it."

"You're cruel, Liddy—and unjust! I love you. I respect you. Have I ever by a word or look shown you any disrespect? When we've been alone at night in the depths of the woods, have I ever forgotten myself with you?" he demanded, not seeing how she winced and stiffened. "Do you think *many* fellows would have treated you with the respect I've shown you? It was because I loved your soul, Liddy—your noble spirit—that I could never insult you. And now I offer you marriage. What more can I do to show you that I respect you—and that my love is true and right?"

Elmer, speaking "no language but his own," his standards in morals, manners, and taste being those of his native village, could not comprehend why Liddy, with *her* standards culled from literature, should manifest no admiration of those honorable and praiseworthy sentiments so sincerely expressed by him.

"If we broke it all off, Liddy," he continued, "I might as well not go back to college—for I couldn't study. I know I couldn't. I'd be sick. I might as well throw up everything I've been striving for. You talk of ruining my life—that's how you'd ruin it! But with your love—and the hope of marrying you before me—there's nothing I couldn't accomplish. You claim to love me—will you help me, then? Or shall I tell my father I'm giving up college and staying home to work on the farm?"

"You won't do that, Elmer?"

But as she looked upon his white, drawn face, his colorless lips, the haggard eyes that had not slept for two nights, she wavered.

"Do you love me so much, Elmer?" she asked wonderingly.

"You've got me *possessed*, Liddy! I didn't know, until we met again the other day in the library, what I did feel for you—though I knew how awfully I missed you when I was away."

"What is it about me that makes you care so much?" she still wondered, as she took in the havoc wrought upon his strong young countenance by the past days of doubt and dread.

"You're beautiful! I don't mean your face, but *you*! I've seen prettier girls, but they might have been made of tissue paper. Your beauty will never pass away, even when you're old and wrinkled, because it isn't just physical. It's your expression—it's what you *are*. Or so it seems to *me*, anyhow."

"If you think so well of me, Elmer, then you surely can't think, can you," she asked wistfully, "that the sin of my father, whatever it was, can weigh so very heavily against me? Mrs. Armstrong once admitted to me that a man would have to be 'reckless' to marry me."

"Has she told you, Liddy, what you once asked me to tell you—the story of your father?"

"No."

"Did you ask her to?"

"Yes."

"And she wouldn't?"

"She said some time she would. But if you would tell me now, Elmer, and we could face it together—it might help me to decide whether I ought to get engaged to you."

For answer, Elmer drew her into his arms and held her, while he passionately kissed her lips, her hair.

"I'll be *damned* if I ever tell you that yarn! I couldn't soil your mind with that horrible story, Liddy. You don't need to know it. I never think of it. I think only of *you*—of how lovely and good you are. My feeling for you seems sometimes to be almost like a *religious* feeling. And I wouldn't have anything bad and horrible come into our pure thoughts of each other."

"Oh, Elmer!" Liddy breathed against his breast.

"Do I love you enough, Liddy, dear? *Will* you be engaged to me?"

"I can't give you up, Elmer! I believe I'm weak and wrong—but it is too sweet to be loved so by you! I can't give you up!"

And when later the minister and his wife joined them in the study, bringing in a little luncheon tray, Elmer was able proudly to offer himself for congratulations, his happiness making him forget to be shy and awkward before these people of another world, and lending to him a grace and charm that made them realize how wonderful he must seem to a simple girl like Liddy.

"That youth will go far," Mr. Armstrong prophesied to his wife when that night they were alone.

"I believe you. A little more college veneer, and he could marry *any* one."

"And yet," said Mr. Armstrong dubiously, "however far these Pennsylvania Dutch may go, they never seem to outgrow their inherent and deeply ingrained peasant attitude toward women. And there's something so rare and fine in Liddy—I'd rather not see her marry one of this race. I fear for her in such a marriage. She'll be bruised."

"Also," added Mrs. Armstrong, "Elmer *is* going to mind tremendously, all his life, Liddy's unfortunate history."

"Yes," Mr. Armstrong agreed, shaking his head. "He's built that way."

CHAPTER XV.

"You wouldn't have needed to dress for *me*—I'm a very plain person," said Gail Appleton, the son of the college president, noticing, as he walked with his friend, Elmer Wagenhorst, through the elm-bordered streets of the old college town, that Elmer wore, under his light coat, a dress suit.

Young Appleton was taking Wagenhorst home with him to dine. He had stopped for him at the college dormitory, where Elmer now lived, for it was almost a year ago that Elmer had got

beyond earning his board as Professor Crawford's chauffeur.

"If you weren't what you call 'a very plain person,'" returned Elmer, "you wouldn't have time to be all the other wonderful things you are. How you manage to keep out of the social jig here I don't understand, for even I find it a job—and I'm not the president's son. Nor am I, like you, secretary of a New York publishing house, where one may meet beautiful and fascinating young dramatists, poetesses, and novelists. When, I say, even I find it a job to elude society——"

"Of course you find it a job," agreed Appleton, casting an appraising eye over the comely person of his friend—the man's splendid physique, his keenly intelligent countenance, his fine, clear-cut features, his well-fitting, modish clothes. "Of course. But it really wouldn't hurt *you* to whirl a little in the social jig. You grind too much. A naturally frivolous character like me isn't harmed by staying out of it. But a highbrow, scholarly person, who for two years has kept his professors jumping to keep ahead of him, *needs* to cultivate shallowness and light-mindedness. Why, it's a wonder I've even got you out to dine with me to-night. Intimate as we've grown in the past six months, Wagenhorst, you've never yet been up at the house except at the formal receptions."

"Remember, I earn my way."

"I know. But other fellows who do that still manage to find an hour once or twice in a term to smile and be happy. You'll grow dull. Your indifference to girls is notorious. That's why they pursue you—not for your own sweet self, only because you scorn them. Why don't you like them?"

"My taste in girls was formed young—on a rather high plane."

"Ah!" said Gail, interested. "Really? I'd never have suspected you of carrying a secret romance about you. You've

kept very mum about it. When you and I, in the still watches of the night, have settled all the stiffest problems of life and death, you've never once mentioned that you'd ever had a girl."

Wagenhorst not replying, Appleton glanced at him, and wondered to see the look of constraint in his sensitive countenance.

"Gee," he thought, "maybe she died!"

He had often wondered at Wagenhorst's uncommunicativeness as to his personal relations and affairs. Close and confidential as he and his friend had grown of late, Wagenhorst never mentioned his home or his people, and Appleton's tentative questions had elicited no information.

"You're not so awfully fond of girls yourself, it strikes me," said Wagenhorst. "I guess we're not so different, after all, in that matter. You couldn't care for a girl who didn't appeal to the higher side of you, Appleton—which is the *real* side of you, you know."

"If you think so, thanks. I used to be infatuated once in so often. As fast as one was off, another was on. But my various recoveries and disillusionments have given me, too, a high standard. I'm sure I'm now impregnable to the greatest charmer ever, if I didn't find her temperamentally companionable. In short, it's a *mate* I seek. I won't marry until I find her. And don't fancy it's easy. I've been on the lookout a weary while, Wagenhorst—and I'm only now beginning to have a glimmer of hope that I'm on the track of her."

There was a vibrant note in the young man's voice that brought Elmer's swift, keen glance upon him, and he was startled to see how Appleton's countenance was illumined, his eyes burning.

"Where did you meet her?" he asked quickly.

"Haven't met her—yet. Haven't even seen her."

"A maiden of your dreams?"

"A flesh-and-blood woman, who may, for all I know, be a hunchback or seventy-five years old. She's the author of a novel that came to our office six weeks ago and that only last week reached my hands. Whatever her outward casement, she's my soul's mate."

"Bigamist! You used to say Jane Eyre was—or her author, Charlotte Brontë. Can a 'soul' have more than one?"

"One's all I care to manage. I tell you, Elmer, when I *do* find the marriageable girl who is my mate—'neither the angels up in heaven nor the demons down under the sea' can keep me from her; for I've learned, even at my tender age, that the only two things of real worth in this life of ours are art and love—and for me love must include comradeship. It rarely does, you know."

"I know."

"You do know?"

"I do."

"Tell me about her."

He noticed his companion's scarcely perceptible wincing. It greatly puzzled him. He never had quite understood Wagenhorst.

The fact was that Elmer had not seen Liddy since that night, over a year ago, when they had plighted their troth in Mr. Armstrong's study. He had not gone home the previous summer, but had spent the vacation in a palace on the Hudson, tutoring the son of a millionaire and living in a luxury that had seemed to him princely. He had come forth from that summer's wonderful Arabian Nights' experience transformed within and without.

The following Christmas vacation, he had remained at the college, tutoring backward "preps" and working night and day on his own studies, with the result that at the opening of the

next semester he had been, in this his second year at college, promoted to the senior class. It was an unprecedented college career, and Elmer had nearly paid the penalty in a nervous breakdown, which might have put a summary ending to his cometlike progress. But his admiring professors, interested and sympathetic, had come to his rescue and helped him in every way, financially and morally, to rally and get on his feet again, and he was now taking things a bit more slowly and rationally.

His relation with Liddy, after this long separation of over a year, was unaltered. They were still "engaged." They wrote to each other constantly—though of late not quite so frequently. But while Elmer was not conscious of any change in himself as to his need of Liddy, and while her letters to him manifested no abatement of her ardent devotion to and faith in him, yet his experiences of the past year had so radically revolutionized his standards, and had so venerated him all over with the semblance of a gentleman, that he could not quite see himself married to a little unsophisticated village maiden who didn't know how to use her knife and fork and spoon—unless, indeed, the Armstrongs had taught her; who had never seen a man in a dress suit; who would be shocked at the sight of a lady in a low-necked gown; who was, even in her own little Pennsylvania-Dutch village, ostracized. No, it was manifestly impossible. He, the most honored member of his class and of his fraternity, and the most courted beau of Collegeville society! He had, in worldly experience and in "the trappings and the suits" of gentility, too, far outgrown Liddy—though the fact remained that, however "green and countrified" she might be, the high ideal of womanhood she had given him made most other girls, as he had told Appleton, seem very insipid to him.

But the problem involved in his entanglement with Liddy did not greatly trouble him. Time enough to settle that. His present need of her was satisfied; let it rest at that. That he must one day ruthlessly make her suffer was a possibility that he refused to contemplate just yet.

"Love and art, you say, Gail, are the only real values. How about science?" Elmer asked, deliberately averting his friend's catechism as to his "girl."

"Of course it's only the zest and spirit with which we do any work that make it of value. The work itself—biff! A castle of cards! Let's see her photograph! Got it about you?"

Now, it happened that Liddy had sent Elmer a photograph of herself for a Christmas gift. He would never forget the surprise it had given him. He had opened it in strict privacy, firmly believing that it would be the usual family-album type of photograph—the stiff pose, the obviously

"best clothes," the crimped hair, and so forth—a thing he would be obliged to hide from the inmates of the dormitory. But the perfect simplicity of the white dress and the naturally arranged hair, together with Liddy's Madonnalike face, made a picture so truly artistic as to quite transcend the limitations of fashionable garb. Elmer, thrilling with pride as he looked at it, had longed to display it forthwith to the inevitable envy of

every male creature who should behold it.

He had, however, resisted the temptation to do that. Elmer was nothing if not prudent.

Now, walking at Appleton's side, he hesitated. Should he risk taking the little picture from his breast pocket, where he always carried it? No one who looked upon it would dream that it was the photograph of a country girl like Liddy. Gail, with his artistic sense,

would appreciate the beauty of it—the fineness and delicacy of the face, the lovely expression of the soft eyes and tender mouth, the graceful lines of the head and shoulders. Elmer had fallen in love with Liddy all over again when



"I've been through the mill of college and foreign travel, and am now on the market—a finished product."

he had received it, and was only now beginning to recover from the passion of longing for her that it had inspired.

Yet he hesitated. To display it seemed too much like committing himself irrevocably.

"You have it!" Appleton accused him. "Don't be bashful. Let's see it!"

Moved by a sudden temptation to display his lady's charms to one who would be so sympathetically appreciative, Elmer cast prudence to the winds and drew it forth.

Appleton stood stock-still in the street near an electric light—for the February afternoon was already dark—and considered it, while Elmer watched him eagerly.

Gail Appleton looked unmistakably what he was—the son of a line of gentlemen and scholars. But, though everything about him, even to the quality and inflections of his voice, bore testimony to a fastidious culture, he was manifestly by no means lacking in force. And the frowning scrutiny he bent upon the lovely young face upon the card suggested not only strength of will, but a nature of passionate fervor.

So long did he stand in motionless silence, gazing at the picture, that Elmer marveled.

"Good God, Wagenhorst!"

"*What?*" cried Elmer.

"She lives and breathes?"

"Of course."

"And loves you?"

"Yes."

"You're engaged?"

Elmer was silent.

"I give you fair warning now, Wagenhorst, before we go any further, I mean to leave no stone unturned to cut you out, to induce her to jilt you. This is the face of the very girl I've been looking for. *This* might be the author—or the heroine, same thing—of the novel I spoke of. It's the embodiment of my mental picture of that heroine's

soul—if you get me. I shall write and ask the author for her photograph, and I'm sure this is the picture I shall receive. The photograph of one who has known two things in this life—the two things deeply written on this face."

"Well? What?"

"Tragedy, for one—and love."

"You're a wizard, Appleton! She has known both tragedy and love!"

"She's beautiful—beautiful! Yes, I shall cut you out. Under the circumstances, do you care to come home to dinner with me?"

Elmer laughed as he took the picture, returned it to his pocket, and the two men resumed their walk.

"You don't take me seriously? But I'm *convinced* that that girl is either the author or the heroine of 'A Village Tragedy.' She looks too much like her not to be. And I *intend* to marry her!"

"How do you feel, Appleton, about a man's marrying out of his class?" Elmer abruptly asked.

"Do such questions interest you?" asked Appleton, with a shrug. "I recognize no 'classes' except those marked off inevitably by character and intellect. This age is coming to count any other standard of value as vulgar and unworthy. The snob is no longer considered fit for the *really* best society."

Elmer considered it gravely.

"Is she, then, so far above you, old man?" asked Appleton sympathetically. "But of course no mere man could be her equal. And as men go, you are worthy of the best. All the same, I shall cut you out. I'm sorry for you—losing a girl like that! No wonder your standard is too high for our girls here."

"What essential difference do you see," Elmer demanded, "between our girls here of the top strata and those of the underworld in this town? They differ only in method. I walk out on the street at dusk, and the underworld

girl comes up and takes my arm and walks at my side. I may shake her off without ceremony or consideration. I go home to my room and find scented notes, boxes of homemade fudge, embroidered cushions, burned-wood collar boxes, crocheted neckties, all of which, as a gentleman, I must acknowledge, though it taxes my already overworked energies. And as I can't send back their damned junk, I've got to pay for it by calling on the givers. The methods of the underworld are less troublesome."

"Also, the underworld girl isn't trying to marry you," added Appleton.

"Nice girls ought to be taught by their mothers," said Elmer, rather fiercely, "not to devil men who want to work."

"The race would die out."

"Such a race would better not be propagated."

"It will be better for *men* when women have the vote," said Appleton. "They'll have a little less time to concentrate upon *us*."

Elmer recalled a remark with which Liddy had once astonished him—he remembered her very words: "It will put a little something more in women's lives than what they have in them now—so the women won't be so dumb."

Elmer's mental picture of Liddy was rather as she had been during that summer of their secret nightly meetings in the woods than as the changed Liddy he had seen only twice during his short Christmas vacation at home, over a year ago. He thought of her with her provincial speech and village outlook, though her letters might have suggested to him that she had not, any more than he, been standing still all this time.

"However," Appleton added, "are we possibly talking like cads? Tell me—what's her name? I want to write a sonnet to her."

"Why should I tip you clews for the

destruction of my prospective domestic felicity?"

"Then I shall call her ' Sylvia.' You won't part with her address, I suppose?"

"It's a secret locked in my bosom, from which medieval tortures shall not drag it."

"Never mind. I already have it. It's the same, I know, as that of the author of 'A Village Tragedy.' A wonderful little manuscript, Elmer! I'll read it to you some time."

"In what way is it so wonderful?"

"In its simplicity, its sincerity, its truth—like that little French dress-maker's story, you remember. And, though it is a tragedy, the background is written in with the most deliciously delicate humor. Our publishing house expects to make a hit with it. I can't help thinking it's the writer's own history—or one she has personally known. It is so refreshingly naïve and unworldly that I felt, while I read it, as if I had hitherto been trying to slake my thirst at a gas run and had now found a mountain spring. Reality is so rare and precious! Do you know Emily Dickinson's poem:

"I like a look of agony
Because I know it's true?"

"That's morbid," declared Elmer.

"But we get so sick of artificiality. A member of a big orchestra once told me how he used to feel refreshed as with a shower bath when a certain famous opera singer would, at something displeasing to her at rehearsal, break out into the oaths of a hodcarrier—primitive nature breaking through conventions and being herself, even though herself was devilish and ugly."

"Those can't be your real sentiments, Gail," Elmer protested, the deep-rooted regard for respectability inherent in the peasant mind making his friend's disregard of it incomprehensible and even distasteful to him.

"But, I say! Yours *is* an interesting profession, Appleton!"

"Well, you'll soon share it with me if you skate through your law course as you're going through your academic courses. The post of legal adviser of our publishing house awaits you."

"You *are* a friend, Appleton!"

"We're all selfish, however. I get a lot out of you, you know. Does Sylvia live where *your* home is—wherever that is? You've never mentioned it."

"Haven't I?" Elmer laughed lightly. "Allentown, Pennsylvania—a prosaic, uninteresting town."

Elmer felt his friend start slightly at this reluctantly given information, and he noticed, in a swift glance, that Appleton's face went suddenly white. He was walking with his gloved hands clasped behind him, his eyes bent frowningly upon the pavement, his lips compressed sternly.

"Allentown, Pennsylvania?" he repeated. "Do you happen to know anybody there named——"

"I know almost no one there," Elmer quickly interposed, fearing that he had, by his subterfuge, let himself in for the mortifying admission that he was not of Allentown's élite. "Here we are," he added hastily, as they reached the gate leading into the extensive grounds that surrounded the stately old house which for several generations had been the home of the president of the college. "Even yet," he continued, as they walked up the path to the lighted house, "though I'm not a freshman, the idea of coming into the august presence of the president rather takes away my breath."

"I'm used to his august presence. That's something I've missed—the experience all college students go through of awe of their president. Though dad assures me he stood dreadfully in awe of *me* when I was born."

They had reached the wide stone

steps of the house, and Appleton, taking out his latchkey, led the way in.

CHAPTER XVI.

Elmer had often of late congratulated himself on the fact that he had advanced so far in his upward climb as to be no longer impressed by the luxury or elegance of the homes into which he was so frequently invited. He valued greatly this sign of his own growing sophistication, even as he detested the bare thought of the "commonness" in which he had been reared.

That he found something in the tone and atmosphere of "the president's mansion," as it was called, that transcended the material magnificence which a year ago had so crushed him by reason of its unfamiliarity he laid to his rapidly developing sense of higher values; he had felt, even at the public receptions in this house, that fine aroma which to-night he perceived with a new keenness. For a hundred years, the Appleton family had lived in this house, two generations, father and son, having for fifty years each occupied the dignified post of president of the college. And behind the two college presidents there had been a line of eminent ancestors, eminent for combined ability and nobility. There was no better blood in America than that of this family. The lares and penates of the household, to be seen on every side in the spacious halls and rooms, gave the place a distinction that—Elmer was keen enough to recognize—was utterly lacking in the gorgeous palace on the Hudson in which he had spent his last summer; as it was also lacking in the rich homes of many of the college trustees to which he was frequently invited by the trustees' daughters.

Elmer was secretly very proud of the testimony to his own inherent worth that Gail Appleton's friendship offered. It was never from Gail that he heard

of the Appletons' honorable ancestry; Gail seemed unconscious of it, and was, indeed, the least "exclusive" fellow of Elmer's present set of acquaintances. But everywhere one went in Collegeville one encountered the pride of the town in the possession of the Appleton family.

While Elmer treasured every sign that Gail Appleton regarded him as an equal, he was too clever to show that he felt honored by his or any one's recognition.

During that strange and wonderful summer on the Hudson, there had been no detail of the manners and customs of the people about him that he had not observed, learned, and inwardly digested. The rapidity with which he had shed his external crudities and taken on the outward semblance of "a gentleman" had been commensurate only with his meteorlike advancement in his classes. But inasmuch as this outward change in him was studied and self-conscious, and not the result of a natural and spontaneous growth from within, it marked rather a spiritual retrogression than the "uplift" Elmer took it for.

Elmer was a pretty fair actor; he had acquired an ease of manner that, under the circumstances, concealed perfectly the trepidation he often felt even yet lest he betray by some inadvertency his plebeian rearing. He was sure that, with the exception of those few students who remembered him as he had been during his first year at college, no one suspected for an instant that he was not to the manner born.

"I'll call Ned to entertain you while I change," said Appleton, ushering his guest into the lighted library, where a log fire burned a delightful, homelike greeting. "Ned!" he shouted, at the library door. "Oh, Ned!" He put his two hands to his mouth and whistled shrilly.

"Who's 'Ned'? Your dog?" asked

Elmer. He had never heard of this member of the family.

An answering whistle from above was followed by a slow, dragging step coming down the stairs; and presently a slim, dark-haired, languid-looking young creature, dressed in a semi-evening gown of a brilliant old-Roman striped silk, stood in the doorway. With an air of bored indifference, she held up a fascinating mouth to Gail to be kissed.

"My sister, Nedra, just returned from Germany. Mr. Wagenhorst, Nedra," pronounced Gail. "Entertain him while I change. Act your prettiest—or your darnedest. He's game."

Gail disappeared; and Elmer, with a perfection of delicate gallantry that would have confounded his family at home, placed a big armchair for the young lady at the fire, a cushion at her back, a stool at her feet.

"A pleasant surprise to find that 'Ned,' who answers to a whistle, isn't a dog!" he said, as he seated himself before her. "I've heard of you, of course, but always as 'Sister.' And Gail didn't tell me you had come home. He ought to have prepared me. Nor had I heard it in the town."

Nedra, lounging luxuriously in the big chair, answered with a lazy drawl, not troubling herself even to look at him:

"The town hasn't hung out flags? Well, I got home only three days ago. Give them time."

"You're home to stay now?"

She nodded slightly.

"I've been through the mill of college and foreign travel, and am now on the market—a finished product. In for a social siege, an endless round of parties. They'll be given for me, so I shall have to attend them whether I want to or not."

"But why, if you're like other girls, shouldn't you want to?"

"Why should I want to? I don't

care a whole lot about social rollicking. There isn't anything I do care a lot about. Sometimes I think I'd perhaps like ranch life. But there aren't any cowboys in Collegeville."

"If you'll go with me, I'll abandon my ambition to study law and buy a ranch!"

"Too sudden," she said, shaking her head. "I never accept sudden and unexpected proposals. And, after all, perhaps I'm not fitted for ranch life. I do like my comforts, even luxuries. And a cowboy's wife, I believe, has to cook and work for him. No man would ever be worth that to me—worth cooking and working for."

"How about his working for you?" suggested Elmer.

"Men don't work for women. For their ambitions—or for a home. I often wonder what girls see in men to get crazy about. You and Brother are awfully great friends, aren't you?"

"We're certainly friends," Elmer responded, with a circumspect repression of the pride he felt in that fact.

He found himself greatly impressed by this girl, so unlike any other of the species he had ever met. There was something oddly fascinating in her air of indifference, her sleepy lack of animation. It was, at any rate, a pleasant contrast, he thought, to the vivacity with which most girls seemed to attack him.

It was not really an overweening egoism on his part that made him chafe at the feminine pursuit of him in Collegeville, for he firmly believed that did the people who sought him know what he came from, they wouldn't look at him.

"You must be awfully worth while," Nedra remarked lazily, "for Brother to care for you. He's so bright himself, he doesn't like commonplace people. He's like father. I must be like my mother. I don't remember her. She died when I was three. Her portrait

is very insipid. I'm insipid, too. There's nothing in me. Father's tried hard to make something of me. He's sent me to college and for six months to France, Italy, and Germany. He makes me—really *makes* me—do all sorts of awful stunts to cultivate my intellect, in spite of the obvious fact that I haven't one. He says that his efforts thus far have been quite without conspicuous or even appreciable results, but he still hopes. My only escape would be in marriage. A husband might let my intellect alone. I understand that husbands don't care about intelligent wives. Father himself married a stupid woman—she must have been, or how could I be so awfully unintellectual? I couldn't have got my stupidity from father. What's your specialty?"

"I'm going to study law."

"Brother says you're awfully worth knowing. I suppose you agree with him. I always feel that people who don't know *me* miss a lot."

"How I've lived so long without that joy is what I'm wondering," Elmer declared.

"I prefer a husband to a father, if I've got to be saddled with *some* sort of a male appendage. Gail's my only comfort. He doesn't expect cleverness of me. He's got more sense. He's resigned to me as I am. But father! Why, even while I was abroad, he insisted upon trying to improve me. He wrote me that, now I was away, I would have an opportunity to practice the art of letter writing and that I should take for my models Madame de Staël and Madame Récamier and write him my impressions of the strange scenes I was viewing. I always try to do what father tells me to; for, besides being scriptural, it's judicious. But in spite of my efforts"—she pouted with a curve on her lips that seemed to challenge Elmer to kiss them—"father wasn't at all pleased—though I sent

him some letters that were almost copies of Madame Récamier's."

Elmer found himself doubtful whether the girl was actually the simpleton she made herself out to be, or a genius.

"If your letters come up to your conversation, I'm sure they're more interesting than Madame Récamier's," he declared.

"Father thinks my conversation's awful. He says I've never grasped and mastered the first principles of the art of conversation. You see, Gail being so all right, father never had to take any pains with him, and that left him free to concentrate all his attention upon me. I wish," she said gloomily, "that there had been seven or eight of us instead of practically only one, Gail not needing any of father's attention. When I look back over my past, I do pity myself. Father has just advertised for a chaperon for me, and here's an answer that came to-day."

She took from her sleeve a sheet of letter paper of a deep pink shade and spread it open. It was typewritten. Leaning her handsome, dark head back against the cushion of her chair, she held the sheet high before her eyes and read:

"DEAR SIR: My present circumstances certainly are so as to make me gladly accept your offer if we should agree. I do not know what salary to ask. Perhaps you let me know what you are willing to pay. You will have noticed already that I am a foreigner. I am a German aristocrat. My husband here is not able to make a living for both of us. He is out West for a month now, and I am lonely. It goes without saying that a woman of my standing is refined and cultured and has good education. I am physically very strong, although I do not look it. I am never sick and have never a cold and have no need to take the slightest care of my health. I am twenty-nine years of age and wear short hair, although not so very short—just to look nice, without having need to dress it. I do not jump upon a cupboard when I see a sweet little mouse, and love snakes, although I would withdraw

if it were a poisonous one, just for love of life."

"She'd 'withdraw'?" Nedra paused to repeat. "Isn't she polite? I'd beat it!"

She resumed:

"I like to read, and read well, but, of course, with a foreign accent. But my accent is French. I do not know why. I do not speak much French. I think it is because I am a high-born German, and speak an excellent German, too—not the Baker German, and consequently not the Baker English, as all your Germans here do.

"If you and your daughter have a pleasant nature, why should we not agree? I am very pleasant and lively, and serious, too, because I have seen much of life.

"Please address, if you wish, and oblige, to
"BARONESS VON DRETSTAG-DARINGHOVEN."

"I wonder," Nedra said, the letter dropping to her lap, her head still reclining, "how father will like *that* sample of the art of letter writing."

"Do *you* want a chaperon?"

"If father decides that my welfare demands it, I shan't be consulted. He's so convinced that I want only what is bad for me that I usually pretend to want the things that I loathe, and to loathe the things that I want. It works."

There was that about this girl—her disregard of his possible opinion of her; her setting in this spacious, wonderful library; her rich and becoming costume; her beautiful hair and slim, white hands; her cultured enunciation; in short, her marked distinction—emphasized, to his imagination, by her background of a remarkable heredity—that appealed to Elmer at his most vulnerable point.

"She's the most aristocratic girl I ever met!" he thought, with a thrill. "Wouldn't a man be proud to have a woman with a manner and an air like that for a wife?"

For when Elmer looked into his shining future, he saw his admirable home presided over—not by an unsophisticated village woman, for whom he would constantly have to be embar-

rassingly apologetic, but by a woman of the world, whom he would be proud to present to his friends, and who would know how to conduct a household as he would wish his conducted, making it an expression—like this home of the Appletons—of the fastidious culture of its inmates. Certainly he could

sitting opposite her venerable and imposing father—the portraits of her ancestors on the walls about her, the old family silver and rare china on the table before her—seemed to him a much more impressive figure than had any of the people of that garish home on the Hudson, where huge expenditure had been the only thing expressed. Elmer realized to-night what was “the best,”

“What did I tell you?” Nedra appealed plaintively to Elmer. “You see now for yourself how he insists on my being superior and intellectual!”



not see Liddy doing that. And so, except for his father's violent prejudice, it was not now the stigma on Liddy's family, but rather her utter unworldliness, that made her seem to him an impossible wife. As for that stigma, he, of course, now recognized it to be merely a local circumstance that would not cling to her away from her home. It was not for that that he would be tempted to repudiate Liddy.

Nedra, presiding at dinner that night,

and with nothing but “the best” would he be satisfied in this life. Deep down in his soul, unformulated as yet to his consciousness, the desire and determination took root this night to woo Nedra Appleton for his wife. It seemed to him, as his fancy merely played with it, a dizzy and well-nigh un-

attainable ambition. He knew that to win any woman of the "class" to which he aspired, and to which, in his present environment, he actually belonged, the drawback of his family connections—which, of course, could not be concealed from the woman he married—could be overcome only by the distinguished professional success to which he confidently and resolutely looked forward.

"My dear," Doctor Appleton said gravely, regarding his handsome daughter across the length of the table, "I have read your synopsis of 'Vanity Fair,' and I regret to tell you that you failed to get Thackeray's point. He had a *reason* for placing chapter ten before chapter eleven that entirely escaped you. Read the novel again, and try to analyze the novelist's purpose in treating his theme just as he did."

"What did I tell you?" Nedra appealed plaintively to Elmer. "You see, now, for yourself, how he insists on my being superior and intellectual! Father dear, how I'd enjoy being a neglected child for a while! Please don't give me so much of your earnest thought and attention!"

"I regret, my dear, that you *require* so much of it!"

"Ring for James, will you, Sister, and hurry him along with the salad? It's immoral to waste so much time at the table. Wagenhorst and I prefer a feast of reason in my room."

"You know, Brother, there's no hurrying James," returned Nedra, though she touched the bell at her foot. "He's from Virginia," she threw off an explanation to Elmer. "A Virginia creeper, I call him."

"My dear!" her father protested. "Your sense of humor is not always, I am afraid, on a high plane."

"I'm afraid it isn't. Is your own sense of humor, father, dear, on a plane too high for this story? Our new-cook had an offer to-day to cook for the

family of some sort of an oil or steel magnate in New York, at a hundred dollars a month, and she asked me to write a refusal for her, telling me to say that she preferred to continue living with the middle class!"

This, it seemed, was a form of humor that Doctor Appleton fully appreciated. That his cook should look upon an Appleton—as compared with "an upstart American money king"—as of the "middle class," was hugely funny.

"It's curious, isn't it," remarked Gail, "how certain words and expressions are falling out of use, or coming to have, in place of their former solemn significance, only a grotesque one? Such as the word 'aristocrat'—almost a vulgarism—and such expressions as 'the middle, upper, and lower classes.' I take it as a sign of the times that we are sweeping toward a form of social and economic equality."

"How long, O Lord, how long?" "quoted the old man, casting a look of fondness and pride upon his son. "I envy you young men all the wonderful changes you will see in this slow-moving world—the changes we now feel so imminently impending, to which all history has been moving through the centuries. I wish I might have been born a generation later."

"One of the changes, I predict," Elmer ventured to remark, "will be the elimination of our menacing leisure class. If, as a nation, we expect to remain healthy and strong, we've got to get rid of that dry rot!"

"The future will know no smart sets," said Gail, "and the world won't miss them. Isn't it strange, the overwhelming ambition of the so-called middle classes to belong to that doomed smart set—when to be in solidly with the workers means so much greater happiness and satisfaction; not to speak of greater self-respect and greater personal dignity?"

"The difficulties you have had to overcome, Mr. Wagenhorst," said Doctor Appleton, "in being obliged to help yourself through college, are not to be compared to the difficulties to be overcome by the young man born without the need to struggle. His fight with the temptation to do and be nothing is, in most cases, as you may easily see if you are observant, almost too much for him. Can you tell us, daughter," he asked, speaking to Nedra in the tone one might use to encourage a backward child, "of your own observation as to this matter, with reference to girls?"

"Let me see," said Nedra, laying her open palm on her forehead. "Now, *what's* the question? My observations with reference to girls who have to make their own way? I'm afraid I'll have to admit the sad fact that the really charming girls come from 'the leisure class.' It takes such a lot of time, you see, to be a charming woman. It includes such endless visits to dress-makers, milliners, hairdressers, manicures, masseuses."

"A shallow and frivolous reply, my dear, though characteristic."

"There's a bit of philosophy in it, however, father," interposed Gail.

"I didn't mean to be philosophical," said Nedra. "There's enough philosophy in this family lying round loose, without my adding to it."

"The womanly charm that lasts, however," insisted her father, "is of other foundation than that built by dress-makers, milliners, and their ilk. The garment of a beautiful and womanly spirit will bestow a grace and charm not purchasable at any shop."

Nedra slowly shook her head.

"The law wouldn't countenance it, father, dear—our going about clad only in the 'garment of a beautiful and womanly spirit.' So, you see, dress-makers are a necessity."

Elmer carefully concealed the fact

that this remark shocked him, for, of course, it couldn't really be out of place if Miss Appleton made it. He was often forced, in those days, to the conclusion that his own sense of propriety must still be very provincial.

"The trouble is," he said, offering his quota to the conversation, "that extremely fashionable people haven't time to be anything else. And if you want to be anything else, you haven't time to be extremely fashionable."

"Have you any sisters?"

Nedra's irrelevancy was one of her most conspicuous characteristics.

"One," he replied, furious with himself as he felt his face grow red.

"What's her name?"

"Sally."

"Older or younger than you?"

"Older."

"Have her come on and visit you," said Nedra, in the friendliest tone she had as yet used to him.

"She couldn't leave my mother very well," said Elmer, getting himself in hand and answering composedly.

"And couldn't your mother come?"

"She couldn't leave my father." He smiled. "It's like the house that Jack built, you know."

"And what couldn't your father leave?"

"His broad lands. He's a farmer."

"I've always thought I'd like to be a gentleman farmer," said Nedra thoughtfully.

Elmer was not sorry that their rising from the table at this moment, to go back to the library for coffee, brought to an abrupt end the discussion of his family.

CHAPTER XVII.

It is to be feared that Gail Appleton, shut up in his room with his friend that evening, did not find him as interesting and responsive as usual. The weighty problems that these two young men generally discussed with

zest, failed, to-night, to catch or hold Elmer's absent attention.

"Look here!" Gail at length broke off suddenly from a discourse he found himself delivering to vacant eyes. "Come back! What's the matter with you? You look as if you were *listening* for something!"

"I am. For your sister's voice and step."

"Indeed! With the photograph of that wonderful girl in your pocket? You're unworthy of her!"

"Of which one?" Elmer boldly asked.

"Surely, after a girl like your 'Sylvia,' you couldn't ever *see* any other woman? Oh, I know Nedra's fatal fascination for our feeble sex!" he conceded. "She's a dear, too—I'm devoted to her. Underneath that extraordinary manner of ennui she carries about with her, she really has deep feeling. And the poor child's lonesome. She doesn't make friends readily with other girls—though men go dippy about her! Her asking you to-night to have your sister on to visit you—it struck me as pathetic. She's hungry for a friend."

"But society, here, must be at her feet."

"She cares so little for society. I think she craves as much as I do the real things of life—companionship and love. And then, you see, she hasn't my passion for books to fall back upon as a consolation. I hope she'll marry soon and have a family. She's the old-fashioned sort of girl for whom marriage and children are the only solution."

"God bless the old-fashioned sort!" said Elmer fervently.

"You're a born conservative, Wagenhorst. But look here! Didn't you say that Sylvia loved you?"

Elmer hesitated.

"Gail, suppose I should tell you that Sylvia is not quite what she appears to be in her photograph—that she is—

well, for the sake of argument, let's say a shopgirl."

"She's not a shopgirl," Gail quietly affirmed.

"You've seen beautiful shopgirls, surely?"

"Never one whose face expressed a soul like Sylvia's—a soul that has thought and felt and lived! I'm not mistaken. In whatever *social* class she may accidentally be placed, she belongs spiritually to *my* class; and you know," he laughed, "what the Appletons think of their class!"

Elmer wondered what would be the effect upon Appleton should he tell him that poor little inexperienced Liddy would regard a city shopgirl as socially many grades above herself. At least, he knew that his sister Sally—who held herself much above Liddy Fitzenberger—was fairly abashed before the style, ease, and fluency of the department-store clerks in Allentown.

And this notion Gail had taken that Liddy must be a writer, a genius! Elmer remembered with amusement how, when, over a year ago, her little story had been published by a suffrage paper, the editor had had to revise the English. Appleton certainly did let his imagination run away with him sometimes. And yet, after all, how discerning he was! For if Liddy had had an education, she *might* have been a writer, responsive and appreciative as she was.

"As I remarked before," said Gail, "if you don't appreciate Sylvia, Elmer, you're unworthy of her!"

"I've never thought myself worthy of her," Elmer admitted.

"Then what are you gassing about? Let me see her again." He held out his hand.

"No—you'll want to keep it."

"I promise honorably to return it."

Elmer, reluctantly and with secret uneasiness, handed over the photograph.

Thereafter, it was Gail who was absent and inattentive, as, with the photograph held upon his knee, his eyes steadily fastened upon it, he tried to respond to Elmer's conversation.

"Why won't you tell me about this girl?" He broke into an analysis Elmer was giving him of a recent work on economics. "What's the mysterious secret about her?"

"What do you want to know about her?"

"All you know. For instance, I once knew a girl who was like a peacock—beautiful until she spoke in a voice like a sawmill. Is Sylvia's voice as harmonious as her countenance?"

"It's of a thrilling sweetness!" Elmer impetuously responded, with a sudden glow of rich memory. "Her voice is one of her greatest attractions."

"And you want to marry her?"

"Did I say so?"

"No—or I shouldn't be asking you."

"I shan't be ready to marry any one for years to come—as you must know."

"You're a cold-blooded fish, Wagenhorst! I never did understand you, quite. You're a puzzling, contradictory personality, do you know it? I suppose that's why you interest me. You're not obvious."

He turned the photograph and glanced at the back.

"'Frank Schultz, Photographer,'" he read aloud. "'Allentown, Pa.' Girl's name——" He held the photograph closer to the electric lamp on his desk. "'To Elmer, with Liddy's love.' 'Liddy'—that's, of course, a pet or nickname? For Lydia? Or Lily? What is it?"

"If Liddy isn't her real name, it's the only one I've ever known her by," returned Elmer, his face flushed as he reached for the photograph. But Gail held it out of his reach.

"Not yet. I'm not through with it. Tell me—is she shy?"

"Shy? Why on earth do you want to know that?"

"It's a curious fact that people of creative imagination are usually shy—Charlotte Brontë, Galsworthy, Barrie, Bernard Shaw——"

"Shaw *shy*?"

"He says he is."

"Well, he certainly can't prove it by his writings."

"Hewlett's writings are no less self-confident, and he was an extremely shy, reserved youth, and is a very retiring man."

"What is it, Gail, in your judgment, that makes a novel popular? Surely not its merit?" asked Elmer, steering the talk away from Liddy.

"Not necessarily its merit, of course. One of two things. If it oozes, gurgles, and drools sentimentality, it sells a million. In America, anyway. An intellectual appeal kills it for popularity. The American public doesn't want to be forced to think. The other selling quality is what the publishers call 'the heart appeal'—the simple human touch. The more simple and the more human, the better. That's why I predict a big success for 'A Village Tragedy.'"

"'A Village Tragedy'?" repeated Elmer questioningly. "Oh, you mean that new book you're crazy about. Got the manuscript here? Can't you read it to me?"

"Sorry I didn't bring it home. But I do want to read it to you. What night can you give me?"

"Next Friday?"

"Good! I'll bring it to your room. Unless you'll come here?"

"It's quieter here," Elmer quickly responded.

Gail mentally noted this unusual readiness to give up another whole precious evening so soon, for Elmer was jealous of time spent away from his studies. Could it be possible that Nedra had so swiftly and so surely smitten him?

"I wouldn't have supposed incon-

stancy to be one of his faults," he thought.

Now Gail was greatly attached to his motherless young sister, and the man who would woo her would have to prove his worthiness. He suddenly realized afresh how little he really knew of Wagenhorst.

"And he could make almost any girl fall in love with him, he's so darned good looking, so chivalrous and well bred, so strong and able! I'll have to keep my eyes open."

"Is this thing—'A Village Tragedy'—the author's first book?" asked Elmer.

"Yes, and our publishing house hopes to make her the rage. I'm having the most delightful correspondence with her. She's so radiantly happy at our accepting her manuscript, and so naïvely astonished at our enthusiasm."

"You haven't met her yet?"

"Not yet. We asked her to come on to New York to discuss terms, but she replied that that could be settled by correspondence. Then I offered to go to her to discuss her next book, but she answered that until 'A Village Tragedy' proved a success, she preferred to remain unknown. She gives us a pseudonym and no local address—only a post-office box."

On his homeward walk that night, Elmer's reflections were gloomy, even bitter. Why had he, with his talents and his ambitions, had the ill luck to be born of a family past redeeming from "commonness"? The bare idea of a girl reared as Nedra Appleton had been coming in contact with his father and Sally made him turn cold. Just fancy any one accustomed to a table appointed as the Appletons' had been that night sitting down at the farmhouse table in the Wagenhorst kitchen, his mother and Sally, wearing gingham aprons and with their sleeves rolled up, waiting upon the men and boys—giving them cups of coffee that looked like shaving mugs, and slices of bread

as big as the map of Texas—his father and brothers collarless and in their shirt sleeves.

He recalled with a faint amusement his protesting to Liddy once against a woman's having white hands, like Mrs. Armstrong's, and keeping a maid.

"Heavens, wasn't I a greenhorn! Liddy knew better than I did *then*!"

He had the grace to make a partial exception of his mother in his mental repudiation of his home.

"If the rest were as nice as mother is—as inherently refined—I could brass it out. But they're just plain-oud common, and there's no getting round it. And I'm saddled with it, and can't shake it off!"

In his deep-down consciousness he knew it was only on the outside that he was not himself as "common" as the rest of his family.

"When two fellows have been brought up as differently as Gail Appleton and I have been—I living in a family where they'd be *ashamed* to be polite to each other, he accustomed from infancy to courtesies and amenities in his most intimate and private relations—well, naturally, our real feelings must be as different as our rearing."

Elmer sincerely regretted that he found it hard—indeed, well-nigh impossible—to overcome certain plebeian feelings on which he had been brought up; for instance, his feeling as to the essential inferiority of women and girls. Gail, he knew, could have no conception of such a feeling. Elmer wished not only to appear, but to be, a gentleman, and he had a secret misgiving—unadmitted even to himself—that he never could be.

Always, when he felt low-spirited or overworked or discouraged, a letter from Liddy consoled and diverted him. He did not himself realize how dependent he had grown upon her faithful, sympathetic letters. To-night, in

spite of his wandering thoughts toward another maiden, the sight of her familiar handwriting on his desk, as he came into his room, at once soothed and cheered him.

Whenever Elmer deliberately considered marrying another woman—and even to-night, when he very definitely considered *the* other woman—he did not think of Liddy's going entirely out of his life. He had once or twice tried to face that—and failed. So he thought of her as continuing to be his lifelong good friend; a little pensive and drooping, perhaps, over the rather cruel fact that he had so outstripped her as to have been obliged to repudiate their youthful impossible dream of a mar-

riage, but not resenting it, being reasonable about it, recognizing her own unfitness for the high place his wife must take, and thankful that he still held down a friendly hand to her on her plane so far below his. It was a comforting picture, and it always warmed him to the tenderest love for dear Liddy.

This evening, coming into his room and seeing her letter, he quickly divested himself of his overcoat, gloves, and stiff collar, flung himself into a big, comfortable chair, adjusted his light, and, tearing open the envelope, settled himself luxuriously for a good, long communion with his dear, true little friend.

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE JULY NUMBER.

READY FOR THE PARTY

OUR Karen's party-bound to-night;

A Danish maid with sea-blue eyes
And golden hair that o'er her white,

Broad forehead binds her coronetwise.
A brave, new ball dress fits about

Her comely form, while on the stout,

Kind feet that serve so willingly
Are shoes that shine—and slay, no doubt!

Grandame and mother—even she,

This old-world Karen—learned to tread
Their folk dance, clumsy-shod, but free,

On nights of white stars overhead,

Sledges, and laughter, and the roar

Of firwood flames; the dark old floor

Aquake, meanwhile, to peasant feet

That from their chinks the dust clods tore.

Grandame and mother 'broidered you,

Sweet maid, a frock for feasts like this;

Yet in your box it hides from view

Lest its quaint charm be found amiss.

But let not these gay stuffs you wear—

Your own proud earnings—dim the rare

And old-time grace that home gift holds,

The old-time love that laid it there!

RHEEM DOUGLAS.

Mrs. Garrison Surrenders

By Margaret Busbee Shipp

Author of "The Builders," "But Half a Man," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. VAN BUREN

How a little kindergarten teacher outwitted a veteran matchmaker: Yes; it's a genuine love story.

WEAR that heavy coat of Meta's when you go for your ride."

Mrs. Garrison inspected Gertie Hewlett with a kind, but critical eye. "Be ready when Mr. Leslie comes. A man doesn't like to be kept waiting."

"I'm not going."

"But I heard Mr. Leslie ask you." The girl's listless attitude made her realize the situation. "Gertie, you haven't sent him away? You poor little motherless thing! Why didn't you ask me first?"

The genuine consternation in her voice made Gertie try to explain:

"Jim asked me to marry him. We've been friends ever since we were children, and I hated to hurt him, but I wanted to be quite honest with him. Jim's good and straight, and his awful puns don't matter as long as we're just friends, but I'd go raving crazy with a—a husband"—she brought out the unaccustomed word awkwardly—"with Jim's messy little mannerisms."

"You don't have to take him for a husband," retorted Mrs. Garrison crisply, for such stupidity was enough to vex a reasonable person. "Just keep him dangling. Don't you know a man is afraid to pay attention to a girl when he's the only one? He feels that he is a *had* man. You've been in this town since September without knowing anybody, but as soon as Mr. Leslie came, he introduced you to Mr. Tuttle.

That's the way one suitor might have helped you to another."

To placate her, Gertie ventured:

"Mr. Tuttle asked to call to-morrow evening."

"I'll see him before you come down," said Mrs. Garrison significantly.

Mrs. Garrison had been a big, ungainly girl, with a heavy chin, strong, white teeth, and robust health; and she had surprised even her family by being the first of four homely sisters to marry. Her husband was an ineffective, amiable man, and their income had been very limited indeed when they had begun to keep house, but it had been stretched to include hospitality. Minnie, who danced well, had come for the winters; Josephine, who golfed, had come for spring and fall; and Nina, who was an intelligent listener, had come when the talkative Mr. Turner had come to board. In a word, within three years, the three sisters had married "suitably."

Then fate dealt Mrs. Garrison five daughters of her own, four of whom inherited their mother's wholesome homeliness. Instead of being dismayed at having to fight her battles over again, she had embarked upon the campaign with the zest of a veteran. The four older girls had been trained to matrimony; they cooked well, sewed well, dressed well, and understood the economics of a household. And as each



She heard Mrs. Garrison say, with an inflection of admiration and reproach:
"Aren't you ashamed to have treated poor Mr. Leslie so?"

had married, she had concentrated her energies upon "helping her husband get along in the world." Instead of having the reputation of being an inveterate man chaser, Mrs. Garrison was praised as a woman whose daughters made excellent wives. With the youngest, Meta, she could relax her vigilance, for the girl was attractive and unusually pretty.

It took more money than the inefficient Mr. Garrison made to have the daughters properly gowned and a home with the inviting air of hospitality. Enticing late suppers and jolly informal raids on the pantry are items in house-keeping; so Mrs. Garrison had five school-teachers as boarders, which helped to run the house. Their sitting room and their bedrooms were on the second floor. They were made comfortable and the fare was good; but the drab life of the second floor was in poignant contrast to the merry, diversified life on the floor below. Gertie Hewlett had begun her kindergarten work with a high heart, but already her suppressed youth was crying out against the monotony of her days.

She dressed with care when she went down to see the pink-cheeked Mr. Tuttle the following evening. Meta was out, so Mrs. Garrison had permitted her to see him in Meta's "little room." As she approached the door, she heard Mrs. Garrison say, with an inflection of admiration and reproach:

"Aren't you ashamed to have treated poor Mr. Leslie so? He came all the way here to see Gertie, introduced her to you, and Gertie immediately became bored to death with him and sent him off. I think it was wicked of you."

Gertie's cheeks burned, though she thought Mr. Tuttle could hardly swallow such barefaced flattery. But Mrs. Garrison knew her man. He mistook the girl's heightened color as confirmation, and greeted her with patron-

izing approval, and Mrs. Garrison retired, satisfied.

For the first time in her life, the temptation came to Gertie Hewlett, by nature as limpid as a mountain spring, to feed this man's vanity and make him like her. When he said good night, he had made an engagement with her for the next dance.

The second floor was happily excited over Gertie's debut. The other teachers were in the late thirties, and Gertie was a favorite with them. When the eventful evening came, Mrs. Garrison herself arranged the girl's hair, lent her the pink beads Meta was not wearing, and invited her and her escort to supper after the dance.

Gertie enjoyed it all with the single-hearted enthusiasm of twenty. She knew that she needed diversion, or she would never have lost her temper as she had done that morning, and with the father of her best-loved pupil at that. Something gallant in David's straight little body, something wistful in his dark eyes, stirred unsuspected depths of tenderness in her heart. As he lived only two doors from Mrs. Garrison's, he always proudly escorted Gertie home. On that particular rainy day, he had had no umbrella, so she had sheltered him to his own door. A man had been standing on the porch. Big and rather stout, he was yet almost absurdly like the small boy.

"D-dad, it rained, and my D-Dertie brought me back."

"I'm very grateful. It was very d-dood in her."

"Don't you know better than that?" Gertie had demanded, as David had run into the house. "I'm trying to break him of stammering—he only does it with the letter 'd'—and to imitate him is the very worst thing you could possibly do."

"I'm sorry," the big man had said penitently. "Thank you for taking an interest in the little chap." He had hes-

itated, and then asked: "Have you noticed anything else I'm doing wrong?"

There had been no hesitation in her reply.

"I wish you wouldn't overemphasize his sex to him in the way you do. He's such a manly little fellow, he doesn't need any stimulus in that direction. 'Daddy says *girls* do that,' is a final argument with him. He has to be certain, in every game we play, that the part he takes is masculine beyond suspicion. In the shoemaker game, he always has to be a boot, and in the butterfly song, he insists that he is a woolly boy caterpillar."

Kennerley's eyes had twinkled appreciatively. It was evident that he indorsed his son's point of view.

When David was absent the next morning, Gertie regretted her frankness. The day wore on heavily. Soon after she returned home, she was called to the telephone, and recognized Kennerley's voice.

"Miss Hewlett, would you mind coming over for five minutes to see Dave? He behaved badly this morning, and Mrs. Banks, my housekeeper, punished him by not permitting him to go to kindergarten. But he has teased me to telephone you until I am overwhelmed by his importunities. He's been crying for you, and I thought——"

Gertie did not stop to hear what he thought. In a few moments, Kennerley heard her quick footsteps on the porch.

"Thank you for coming," he said, as he led the way to the nursery. "I'd better explain the trouble before we go in. Some idiot told Dave his eyelashes were so long that they ought to belong to a girl." He smiled guiltily, remembering her scolding of the day before. "Well, this morning the little chap *cut 'em off!* It's a miracle he didn't put out his eyes, but he did stick the point of the scissors into his cheek. I had Doctor Howard here to bandage it up."

David's greeting was characteristic. It was not in words at all; it was in the lovely, warm glow in his face, as if everything in the world was better now that she was here; and the question was put as to one of whose interest he was sure:

"Must I paint this teeny puppy pink?"

Gertie sat down by him, and was soon as absorbed in the painting as Dave. Kennerley forgot his newspaper, and Gertie entirely forgot him; a stout father mattered to her infinitely less than a child. She did not mention the crime of the eyelashes, but presently David rubbed his head confidently against her shoulder.

"I won't ever cut 'em off any more," he volunteered.

Because of the tenderness with which the girl kissed the little dark head, Kennerley screwed up his courage to open an uncomfortable subject:

"Miss Hewlett, Doctor Howard has been telling me of your protégé at the hospital."

"You mean poor Anthony Gibbs?"

"Yes. Howard is much interested in the case and in your coöperation. He's greatly annoyed that your visits to your friend should be a subject of misinterpretation. He wishes to protect you from any unkind or foolish gossip."

Her eyes blazed with indignation.

"Did Doctor Howard tell you Tony's story? We were raised in the same little town, and I've known him all my life, even though he is ten years older than I am. Just after he left college—he was only twenty-two—he went to New York for the first time, and met a girl and married her in a week. She was as pretty as a magazine cover, and all of us little girls were perfectly crazy over her. It was the first time any of us had ever seen a 'picture hat,' or anybody who painted her face, and you can imagine how it thrilled us! I don't know yet why she married Tony,



"Must I paint this teeny puppy pink?"

unless it was because she was already a drug fiend, and needed somebody to take care of her. And he *did*. Whatever his other failures have been, he didn't fail her.

"I suppose the place bored her to death, and after a while she began going with another man. People cut her, but Tony stood right by her, and wouldn't have anything to do with his old friends. Then he sold out and got together what money he could, and they went North. No, Dave darling, paint

the oranges yellow and the leaves green. Like this—don't you see?"

"And then?" asked Kennerley.

"Why, after Tony had spent his money, she went off with the other man. Tony went all to pieces. I think he had already begun to drink. Then he had pneumonia, and he finally came back, a nervous wreck. His mother sent him here to Doctor Howard, and if he can make Tony physically well again, they're going out to Arizona, where Mrs. Gibbs' brother has a ranch,

and Tony can make a new start. But his spirit is broken. He hasn't the slightest desire to live, or to get strong, or to go anywhere. When his mother wrote me to try to get him interested, I began to drop in at the hospital every day or so, but Tony would hardly speak to me at first. Now he loves to hear me talk about the people at home, or to read my letters to him. He's just starved with loneliness, and I'm going to help him—even if a few nurses do gabble."

"I wonder if he would feel it an intrusion if I asked Howard to take me in to see him?" suggested Kennerley rather hesitantly.

"If you only would!" she said, with a swift upward glance of gratitude.

"Talk some to *me*," demanded Dave.

When Kennerley went back to his office, he carried the picture of the girl's loving, responsive face, as David cuddled against her. He altogether lost sight of the fact that no one could call her pretty.

But Tuttle didn't. He was surprised at his own magnanimity in asking her to the next dance; not that he was going to create false hopes, but if a girl falls in love with a man at first sight, it's hardly up to him to prevent it. In evening dress, with her clear skin and white throat and neck, she really did very well—and how the poor little creature hung on his words!

As for Gertie, she fed his inordinate vanity until she marveled that it was not surfeited. She accepted his unspoken assumption of her secret admiration for him. Her spirit was galled every time she was with him, but it became an understood thing for them to go together to the dances. As she danced well, it was never difficult to fill out her card, but nobody except Tuttle was sufficiently interested to care whether she had an escort or not. Once she overheard Tuttle say to an intimate:

"Oh, one has to pass the time with somebody, and it keeps Sophie guessing. I take pains now and then to let Sophie hear that a little bunch of calico up here isn't too indifferent to yours truly."

Gertie slipped back into the dressing room, sickened at the coarse summing-up of their relationship. She determined to end it, but when they reached home after the dance, Meta's "little room," with its tempting luncheon and open fire, looked so inviting that Gertie lacked the courage to give it all up. Tuttle was the only key she held to its enchanted door.

As the men were about to leave, Meta's escort said:

"Won't you go with me to Louise's dance at the country club Friday afternoon?"

Meta demurred because of a half promise to Alex Metcalf, and, while they were discussing it, Tuttle said impudently:

"Of course, I'll see you out there, Gertie? Save me a fox trot, won't you?"

Biting back the rejoinder that rose to her lips, the precepts of Mrs. Garrison prevailed, and she returned lightly:

"Oh, I'll be playing Cinderella in the ashes. Only, I haven't any fairy godmother to come to my rescue—I'm dependent on the prince himself."

Tuttle puffed out his pink cheeks and lowered his voice almost tenderly.

"May I play prince, Cinderella?"

"I imagine I'd like you in the rôle," she whispered gayly; but, when she went upstairs, she hated herself and wondered if any dance was worth it.

The question was settled for her on that Friday afternoon. When the dance was nearly over, Tuttle suggested that they should go outside. She put on her coat, and they strolled down to the frozen lake.

"I think we have the best of it," she

said; "the lake and the pines and the lovely winter twilight all to ourselves."

He misunderstood her allusion to their solitariness, and slipped his arm through hers. She didn't like it—but Meta allowed it.

"It looks as if the prince had run off with Cinderella," he suggested, again with that intimate note in his voice. For the moment he was in love, not with Gertie Hewlett, but with the image of himself as the enthroned prince of this little Cinderella's heart.

She had a startled sense of his pink face amazingly near—and then he had kissed her.

There are several dignified courses of conduct to pursue under these circumstances, but Gertie did none of them. She turned and fled. To put a million miles between Mr. Tuttle's dimples and her cheek was, perhaps, the nearest approach she had to a coherent thought. Tuttle tried to run after her, but she outdistanced him as a deer might a house dog. He called, but she did not stop to listen—hardly distinguishing his words from the whirl of the runabout that overtook her and stopped. Kennerley jumped out.

"Get in, Miss Hewlett," he said, in rather the same tone of benevolent despotism he might have used to Dave.



To put a million miles between Mr. Tuttle's dimples and her cheek was, perhaps, the nearest approach she had to a coherent thought.

"I'll take you home. You can't run three miles to town, you know."

He helped her to the seat beside him, and she burst out crying.

"Have your cry out, child," he advised kindly. "I was on the brow of the hill fixing my tire, and I saw what happened."

"I sh-shouldn't think you'd want me in your car," she sobbed.

"You little goose! It wasn't your fault if that pup——"

When she could control herself again, she confessed, with her characteristic honesty:

"Yes, it was my fault. I think he is

vain and dull and tiresome, but I've been going with him for what I could get out of him; and he went with me for—for what he thought I would give him. It's all horrid, *horrid*, and I am to blame for it all!"

"I think I blame Mrs. Garrison," he returned gently. "We're nearly home now. You won't mind my telling you that your eyes are red? Suppose you come in and see Dave?"

Gertie was willing enough to postpone explanations to Mrs. Garrison, but David was to be reckoned with.

"You've made my Dertie cry!" he accused his father. "Kiss her and make her well."

"But that's what makes her cry. Suppose you try, Dave."

Two tight arms around her neck, a soft cheek against hers, and an indignant voice threatening, "If anybody hurts you, I'll stamp 'em with my foot, and I'll mash 'em on the dround, and I'll squash 'em," and in the miraculous way known only to childhood, David had healed her hurt.

"Tell us a story," suggested Dave presently, in his eagerness relapsing into the stammering he was outgrowing. "D-daddy, don't you want to hear 'bout Bobby and Billy Bullfrog? They's twins."

"Indeed I do," said his father promptly. "I'm sad at hearing about hungry children and sunken ships."

In the rocker before the nursery fire, with her champion gathered close in her arms, Gertie recounted the adventures of the bullfrogs, and the big David and the little David had much the same look of contentment as they listened.

The reckoning with Mrs. Garrison came after tea.

"Gertie, what is this Eddy Tuttle told Alex Metcalf? He said he barely kissed you—merely brushed your cheek—and you screamed like a wild cat and ran in to town."

"I didn't know it was 'merely,'" explained the girl, in confusion. "He kissed me, and I hated it, and I never want to see him again."

"Now listen, Gertie, and don't talk arrant nonsense. Men don't like silly prudes. You make a kiss much more serious than it was intended to be. It doesn't seem womanly or modest to exaggerate it so. Mr. Tuttle is a very nice fellow, and *he is the bridge on which you cross*, remember. Now, he is very properly offended, and he said to Alex that unless you showed you were sorry, he'd never trouble about you again. The girls are getting up a charity ball, and each one is choosing the partner to whom she wishes to be assigned, so you can choose Mr. Tuttle, and he'll understand it. And you can make it up without a word being said."

"I don't want to make it up." The quiet hour by the nursery fire had given Gertie the courage of her convictions again. "I've never liked him. I'm sorry I ever pretended that I did."

"Very well. Then there's nothing more to be said. You've thrown away two opportunities this winter. A plain girl can't afford to be quite so high-handed, especially when her own conduct is open to criticism. One of the nurses at St. Luke's told me this afternoon that you go every few days to see a patient there—a divorced, disreputable drunkard. I've tried to help you, Gertrude, but I've finished now."

In the next two months, Gertie realized this to the full—no more dances, no more jolly spins to the country club, no more games of auction in Meta's little room, no more *youth*. But it seemed as if her responsibilities increased with the weeks. For Anthony Gibbs had aroused from the lethargy of despair, and he was alive again with the birth pangs of an awakening soul.

His mother had come and had rented a tiny apartment, so that her son could

be under Doctor Howard's care and yet without the restraint of a hospital. Mrs. Gibbs was a timid, dependent person, who felt aggrieved if Gertie did not come in every day. Probably Tony did not realize the cruelty of taking a young girl into the dark chambers of his despair and remorse; and her wholesome optimism, her sunny common sense, swept like a fresh breeze through the noxious corridors of his self-centered misery. To him she embodied his own carefree youth, his old home, his old associations, and the simple, clean standards toward which he was slowly climbing back. Doctor Howard, seeing as a physician the benefit his patient gained from the daily association, lost sight of his early fears that it would subject the girl to criticism.

Kennerley dropped in with increasing frequency. A genuine friendship seemed to spring up between the two—the big, capable man of affairs and the derelict, with his broken body and his wistful dog's eyes.

There was an April night when Gertie had stayed to tea with Mrs. Gibbs. Tony was talking volubly, excitedly, with an increasing degree of nervous irritability. Mrs. Gibbs drew the girl aside and said anxiously:

"When Tony argues like that, it means he feels the lack of a stimulant, and that he'll have one of those terrible nights of insomnia. I begged him to let me send for Doctor Howard, but he won't."

Slipping out into the hall, Gertie telephoned for Kennerley. He was there in a few minutes, and all her apprehensions fell from her as she saw that he immediately recognized the situation.

"You wish to fight this out for yourself, Gibbs, don't you? If you like, we'll go for a long spin until the air makes us so sleepy that we'll want to toddle to bed."

Tony turned irresolutely toward Gertie.

"I'm going with you," she said.

The miles slipped fast behind them, as they sped along the country roads. At first Tony kept up a restless chatter, but after a while he dropped into a natural mood, teasing the girl and poking fun at himself in the whimsical way of the Tony of old. There were lapses into silence, then a long quiet. Kennerley, turning his head, saw that Tony had dropped asleep, his head against the girl's shoulder.

"Hush!" she warned softly. "I don't mind. Just so he sleeps."

Kennerley had gone farther than he realized, and even though the ride had accomplished his purpose, he was annoyed with himself when midnight struck as they reached Tony's home. He went in with him for a moment.

"Won't you sit here in front with me?" he asked Gertie, when he returned to the car. "There's something I want to tell you."

Afterward Gertie remembered that neither of them said a word. A sense of peace infolded her—of thankfulness that Tony was sleeping, of security in Kennerley's strength and help, of harmony with the quiet night.

"Why, are we home already?" she exclaimed in surprise, as the car stopped at Mrs. Garrison's door.

"No." She was struck by the odd ring in his voice. "We're two homeless people, you and I. But you've helped Mrs. Gibbs to regain hers. Good night."

Meta had been entertaining her card club, and the last two guests were departing. Metcalf was lingering in Meta's room, and Tuttle was waiting for him in the hall. As Gertie opened the front door, she drew back, startled to see him there.

The late hour, the whirl of the departing automobile, and something profound and sweet in the girl's manner,



An ugly little sneer distorted Tuttle's moist lips. "I'm not quite sporty enough for you, eh? You prefer the society of reformed drunks?"

challenged Tuttle's attention. He had always been piqued at the inglorious termination of his affair with Gertie.

He put his hand on her arm. His voice was intimate:

"Well, little lady, who has been running away with you at this time of night? Some luckier fellow than yours truly. Suppose we let bygones be bygones, and drop in together at the dance Friday night? Shall we?"

With a sense of having been cleansed, she realized that it was not

the slightest temptation to her to accept.

"I can't—I can't possibly go," she stammered.

An ugly little sneer distorted Tuttle's moist lips.

"I'm not quite sporty enough for you, eh? You prefer the society of reformed drunks?"

Without replying, Gertie went upstairs to her room.

Mrs. Garrison came out of the dining room, where she had been busy putting away the remainder of the cold chicken for to-morrow's hash.

"Good night, Mrs. G. It does seem queer to me you let that young lady perch here."

Mrs. Garrison looked alarmed. She knew that Meta's background must be above suspicion.

"Tell me, Ed," she asked. "I don't understand."

"Oh, I don't care to tell tales." He puffed out his cheeks. "But this seems rather an odd hour to be joy riding. There's a patient of Doctor Howard's in one of the brick flats opposite the Roost, and I've heard some of the boys comment on the fact that Miss Hewlett seems to call on the gentleman in question about every day. There's a mother in the background, to play propriety, so let's hope no harm's done."

"Thank you for telling me, Eddy," replied Mrs. Garrison gravely. "Will

you let me know if you hear anything else?"

That was early in May, and the kindergarten closed two weeks later. Gertie was busy with her packing when Mrs. Garrison knocked at the door.

"Miss Hewlett, I shall have to ask you to make arrangements to board elsewhere when you return. For your sake, I have let you stay here until the term was out, but I shall not be able to take you next year, or to act as a reference for another place. You've been seen out riding late at night, with a man, presumably intoxicated, asleep against your shoulder."

Into the girl's tired face flashed defiance of the whole world's injustice.

"I demand the name of your informer."

Dave's voice was heard outside, calling her. The girl's face changed swiftly as defiance was blotted out in tenderness.

"No, you needn't tell me. It doesn't greatly matter. As my train leaves at ten, and I'm having tea with Mrs. Gibbs, this is good-by, Mrs. Garrison." She faltered a moment, and then went on steadily: "Once you tried to be kind to me in your way. I haven't forgotten it. And there aren't many people who are kind in one's own way. I'm coming, Dave."

"Dad's here, and he's goin' to take us to ride 'way, 'way out in the country!" cried Dave excitedly.

It was a relief to be out of the house and into the fragrant stillness of the pine woods. As the girl leaned back in the car, quiet and relaxed, it seemed to Kennerley that the spirit in her illumined her face, in spite of her fatigue and weariness.

"There's something about you so unbeaten, so erect," he said gently.

To keep him from seeing that her eyes brimmed with tears, she bent her face against Dave's. For the first time she noticed that it felt hot.

"Does anything hurt you, my precious?"

"I've swallowed sumpfin in my throat," he said thickly.

Gertie's eyes met Kennerley's in quick apprehension. There had been a recent epidemic of diphtheria.

He sped the car home and telephoned for Doctor Howard. David began to fret for Gertie to take him, but Kennerley shook his head.

"Please don't stay near him," he whispered. "I can't bear for you to be exposed to any possible danger."

The child heard enough to gather that his beloved was being urged to leave him. He winked back his tears.

"I won't cry if you stay. My neck's sick."

"I'll stay right here by you, darling." She knelt down by him and put her arms around him, as he lay limp against his father, patting him and singing the songs he liked until he began to drowse.

"I beseech you to go into another room," urged Kennerley, in a low tone. "You're exposing yourself. You may be kept here in quarantine."

A look of relief flashed over her face.

"I was wondering how I could stay with Dave. Mrs. Banks doesn't understand him, and the nurse will be strange to him. If the doctor will only quarantine me, it will be all right."

"Don't you see?"—he hesitated, and then went on with it—"that you are a young girl, and you couldn't stay here with me?"

It dawned on her for the first time. Her cheeks flushed, but her voice did not falter.

"Then, please, couldn't you go? I can do more with Dave when he's sick. Oh, thank Heaven, there's Doctor Howard!"

Kennerley carried Dave to his room, and Gertie waited for what seemed an interminable time until she heard Doctor Howard's voice.

"Well, Miss Gertie, you're a mascot," he greeted her. "Dave has follicular tonsillitis, but he'll be all right in a few days. I've another piece of good news for you. Gibbs promised to-day to go to Arizona. An old doctor who has a way of butting in"—Howard's face twinkled—"told him that he was subjecting a certain little girl to some very cruel criticism. The gossip reached me to-day, and I went straight to Gibbs with it. All the manhood in him was aroused. He said you had been sister and friend and ministering angel to him, and that if you were having to suffer for it, it was time for him to brace up and prove to you and his mother that he was worth the sacrifices you've made. I quite agreed with him, and I have hopes that he'll be all right ultimately. He and Mrs. Gibbs leave next week for the ranch, and they're planning to talk it all over with you to-night. Now I must trot along to the hospital, and send Dave a nurse. Good-by." He hurried off.

"Dave's fast asleep." Kennerley's face was aglow with relief, but his words came unsteadily. "When I feared my boy had diphtheria, and that I had exposed you to it—" He broke off.

"It—it wouldn't have mattered about me," she faltered.

She did not understand the emotion that seemed to flood her being. She was so thankful about Dave, so glad for his father. But did he always look so much like Dave—so—so *dear*?

His arms suddenly closed around her.

"Oh, my little girl, don't you realize how infinitely precious you are? Don't you know yet that you and Dave—just you two—make all the world to me? I've been afraid I should frighten you this winter—you were so unconscious of me—but you've grown into my life until the need of you is so imperative that I can't wait any longer to tell you."

He put his hand beneath her chin and lifted her face. "Don't look at me in that *motherly* way," he demanded. "I don't want you because you're sorry for me, as you were for poor Gibbs. I want you to marry me because"—something wondering and radiant dawned in her clear eyes, and he caught his breath—"because you love me," he finished, and bent his face to hers.

When she spoke, the emotion under her half-inarticulate words made them very beautiful to Kennerley:

"My mother died when I was a baby, just as David's did. When I think of mother, I'm ashamed of my quick temper, and many, many things, but I don't believe I'll ever be ashamed when I think of Dave's mother, because whatever mistakes I make will be mistakes of love—and his mother will understand."

Only to Mr. Garrison did his wife ever speak her inmost mind.

"The slyness of that Hewlett girl!" she gasped. "She fooled me to the top of her bent, and I'm not easy to fool. But I thought Mr. Kennerley too wary. You know how he acted about Bess, and again with Meta. When a man could be actually rude to a girl as pretty as Meta, who would have dreamed of his falling in love with a plain creature like Gertie? Alex says Eddy Tuttle is scared to death, as his place in the bank depends on Mr. Kennerley's good will, and that he is running around telling everybody who'll listen to him what a perfectly lovely girl Gertie is! They're going to build a lovely home in the country, and get a big, new car and a pony for Dave. Think of Gertie laying her trap for the catch of the town, and using that poor wreck in the hospital as a blind"—Mrs. Garrison's voice gave grudging admiration to a superior strategist—"and making even *me* believe that she was fond of Dave!"

Husbands as Conversational Assets

Another Tea-Table Discussion

By Hildegard Lavender

Author of "Leaks," "What Women May Learn from the Bosses," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURA E. FOSTER

THE bride had come in to tea, bubbling and smiling, from one of those economic shopping expeditions in which goods are exchanged rather than purchased. As she munched her toast and sipped her orange pekoe, she told the tale of her mild adventures to her friends.

"Isn't it perfectly amazing," she asked, "the way in which people may know a man all his life and yet not have the faintest understanding of his tastes? Now, Harry's sister Dora sent him neckties for Christmas—six, quite lovely ones as far as quality was concerned—but, oh, my! You all know—it seems as though you must know, seeing Harry as often as you do—how quiet his tastes are in wearing apparel. He simply loathes loud colors, he can't bear glaring patterns. I wish you could have seen those things that Dora, who has known him all his life, sent to him! Purples and crimsons, large brocaded roses and daisies, things that a college sophomore or a boy at a prep school might love to wear, but Harry never! And the same way with the socks that his brother George's wife sent him. Isn't it amazing? Harry's taste is almost Quakerish, I think. In everything, not alone in his own clothes. He likes me to wear fawn color and dove color and all those neutral tints, and his idea of a really stunning suit is dark-blue serge. Wouldn't you think——"

But some determined member of the group rudely thrust into the bride's prattle, and stopped the narrative in regard to Harry's tastes. Some other woman managed, for a moment or two, to tell what her husband thought in regard to colors. The bride finished her tea in silence, and then rose to take her departure.

"It's Thursday," she informed them supererogatorily, "and it's Dinah's afternoon out. I'm going to make Hungarian goulash for dinner. Harry is so fond of those spicy meat dishes, and Dinah doesn't do them very well. We generally have them for Sundays and Thursdays, when she's out. Sometimes I think Harry really likes it better those evenings than the evenings when we are properly cooked for and waited upon. Don't you suppose most men are fond of cozy, intimate times with their families? I know that Harry—— Goodness gracious!" She looked at the clock and started for the door. "It's a quarter of six! I had no idea it was so late. If there's one thing Harry loathes, it's unpunctuality. I suppose it's business training that makes men like that. Good-by. Please forgive me for eating and running."

As the door closed behind her, the doctor, who had been in a taciturn mood all afternoon, gave a great groan and handed her empty teacup back to the dispenser of the beverage.



"Good-by. Please forgive me for eating and running. If there's one thing Harry loathes, it's unpunctuality."

"Give it to me strong," she begged, "strong as lye. I need something to brace me up. Harry's a worthy young man, but some dark night I shall wait for him around an obscure corner and fell him to the earth with a sandbag. If he's unconscious for a few weeks, maybe our bride will stop talking about him."

"Don't be hard on her," said the grandmother indulgently. "All young married women are like that. By and by, she'll get over it. It's only a brief phase."

"She'll get over it only to talk about her babies," prophesied the débutante gloomily. "Why can't women find some

other subjects of conversation besides their own intimate personal affairs? Married women, that is."

"I suppose," scoffed the hostess, "unmarried chits, like you, discuss only international problems, or the conclusions of the Society for Psychical Research, when you meet one another?"

"Well," answered the débutante vigorously, "at any rate, you don't hear us endlessly discoursing upon the likes and dislikes of some one man. Even an engaged girl has a certain decent reticence about her fiancé. And, of course, the girls who aren't even engaged are very conservative in their admissions as to what they know about

any given man's character or temperament, except their fathers' or brothers', and they know no one is interested in them. But married women!"

"That's really too sweeping an assertion," the hostess insisted, almost with an air of personal injury. "I grant you that young married women, like our bride, and very young mothers with their first babies, are apt to consider that the sun, moon, and stars revolve about their husbands or their offspring. But after that early period of excitement over new possessions is past, I don't believe women are any more given to talking about their menfolk than men are about their womenfolk."

"Poppycock!" The doctor, fortified by her strong tea, hurled herself into the conversation with something of a catapult effect. "Consider for a moment, and see how false that idea is. Does each one of us here know well all the peculiarities of the masculine connections of the whole tea-table group? Of our own knowledge, I mean? Of course we don't! We meet them two or three times a month at dinner, or over a bridge table, or we dance with them twice in the winter, or play golf with them twice in the summer. What could we learn about their intimate foibles from such meetings? And yet I declare we are tiresomely well acquainted with them. We know the size of their socks and their tastes in tooth powder. We know their attitudes toward their sisters, their cousins, and their aunts. We know whether they smoke too much and whether they drink too much. We know whether they like their bedroom windows wide open or only a few inches open. We know whether they insist upon going over the household accounts once a week or once a month or not at all. We are fairly well informed as to their luncheon menus, and we know how much time they allow themselves for getting to the office each morning.

"It's indecent, actually indecent, the amount we know about a lot of men in whom we have not a particle of personal interest, and who have the right to be taken by us at their face value, but who never can be—their wives have attended to that! And do you mean to tell me that men talk in any such intimate way to their business associates about their wives? Nay, nay, Pauline! In the first place, they've got something more important to talk about, and in the second place, they have more conversational delicacy."

"Conversational delicacy!" The protest was chorused at her from half a dozen throats.

The grandmother, with a smile of special superiority, elucidated the exclamation for all of them.

"My dear," she said, "when you are an older woman and have had more experience with men, you will know that conversational delicacy among them is not, to put it mildly, their strong point. Goodness knows the colonel"—the grandmother's spouse had come out of the Civil War with that title and a crippled leg—"is very far from being vulgar or profane in his talk. But even he brings home bits of gossip from the club which contradict that pretty theory of yours, dear doctor, about the conversational delicacy of men!"

"But those bits of gossip are not quotations from club members concerning their own wives and daughters, I take it?" said the doctor judicially, but firmly.

"No, I suppose the gossip is generally about other men's wives, or about no men's wives," admitted the grandmother, truthful even under strain. "But I can assure you that conversational delicacy is not the characteristic of the anecdotes."

"But you admit that the conversation would be even more indelicate if the anecdotes were repeated by the club members in regard to the women of

their own households?" The doctor preserved her judicial tone and had altogether the air of a cross-examining lawyer.

The grandmother grudgingly agreed to this.

"That's all I'm claiming," explained the doctor. "That it is more indelicate for men and women to give away the secrets that they have special means of discovering, so to speak, than to give away those that are the fair prey of all the world. It seems to me, somehow, like hitting below the belt, this universal feminine-matrimonial habit of revealing all the little foibles and shortcomings of the masculine party to the contract—and to an uninterested audience, at that! It may be all right for Richard A. to confide to Robert B. that Mrs. C. is a well-known shrew, or that Mrs. D. will shortly land her husband in the bankruptcy court, or that Mrs. E. has been going the pace of late; but what would you think of Richard A. and Robert B. if they gave to each other similar information in regard to Mrs. A. and Mrs. B.? And that's what women are doing—married women—all the time."

"It may seem a little unfastidious to you," said the hostess reluctantly, "but I agree with grandmother, here, that it's only the very young married women who are guilty of that particular lack of delicacy and good taste. You mustn't condemn the whole race of wives because of the conversational indiscretions of the bride."

"I wish I could agree with you," said the doctor politely. "But you forget that I see a good many wives, first and last, in the course of my day. Young ones, middle-aged ones, old ones; ecstatic ones, take-'em-for-granted ones, disgruntled ones; dependent ones and independent ones; trying ones and trial ones; firsts and seconds! And out of that wide knowledge, I can solemnly assert that, so far as their talk goes,

they're all pretty much alike. I've come to the conclusion that all married women are divided into three classes—those who quote their husbands as authorities, those who quote them as tyrants, and those who quote them as intellectual opponents. But to quote them is universal."

"That sounds scientific, but you can't prove it," insisted the hostess.

"I can if you will all be fair and not deny your own experiences. We all know perfectly well that our dear little bride is typical. She isn't an exception from the race of brides; she's an example. If there were such an institution as a bride shop, she could be perfectly labeled, 'Sample, not to be sold,' and placed in a case; and any one desiring to invest in brides would know perfectly well, after looking at her in her glass box, what he was going to get.

"Well, our bride—our sample of all brides—belongs to the first class I mentioned. She quotes her husband as authority. They don't go to church any longer on Sundays, and why? Because Harry thinks that 'it does them more good, spiritually as well as physically'—don't throw anything at me, for I'm merely quoting—to take a little run into the country in the car, or to play a game of golf, or even—as I correct these utterances by an occasional actual glimpse of our bride's Sunday morning—to sit at home in dressing gown and slippers, surrounded by a sea of Sunday papers.

"We all know that our bride is a firm believer in the cause of the Allies, although she came out of a pro-German household. Why? Because authority, in the person of Harry, has declared that Belgium must be avenged. We know that he dislikes women to use French perfumes, and that he has grave doubts about the advantages of the higher education for our simple sex. We know that he is quite sure that suffrage is coming, but that he hopes women will never forget their true mis-



"And when I think," she pursued impressively, "that free love might mean the disappearance of the husband from women's conversation, I am almost tempted to become a believer in that doctrine!"

sion and run for public office. We know that he has the magnificent courage of his convictions and declares Shakespeare overrated, and we know that he thinks 'Ruggles of Red Gap' the funniest book ever written. We have just learned, in case we happened to be ignorant of it before, that he likes spiced dishes and dislikes spiced clothing. And why do we know all this? Because the bride, our sample bride, quotes Harry everlastingly as an authority."

"But we've already admitted," the grandmother gently reminded her, "that the young married woman is, perhaps, a little too given to discoursing about her husband. We only claimed that the older ones were exempt."

"Wait a minute," the doctor pleaded. "I'm coming to the older ones. Don't we all know cheerful, happy, self-respecting married women, long past the bridal period, who live in a state of apparently perpetual jocular warfare

with their husbands? Aren't they forever telling you that they haven't dared to let Jim see the dressmaker's bill? Aren't they perpetually announcing that they don't know what they're going to do about the dinner party next week because they've simply got to invite Cousin Susan this time, and John can't bear Cousin Susan? Aren't they always representing the good, kind, commonplace providers of their family incomes as stern tyrants who must be propitiated by petty sacrifices or blinded by petty deceptions? You know it's so, now isn't it?"

Then, as they seemed a little inclined to dispute, she called off half a dozen names, and the reluctant assents to her proposition came trailing in.

"I even know women who ought to know better," pursued the doctor warmly, "who are guilty of this everlasting quotation from their husbands. When they get along to a certain stage of intellectual development, when they have tasted a certain measure of independence before marriage, I don't say that they are so apt to tell you what Darby likes for breakfast and whether coffee agrees with him; I don't say that they are so prone to picture their good man as wielding some sort of domestic club, after the fashion of his cave ancestor. But they still manage to ring him into the conversation. You can't help knowing what a married woman's husband thinks on every subject, whether you want to know or not!

"The way the more independent ones work it is rather interesting.

"I myself am a great admirer of Wilson," says the emancipated modern wife, who would scorn to be the sort of echo our little bride is, 'but Darby thinks that if Roosevelt had been president during this time——' and so on.

"Or she says: 'Yes, I'm going to be on the platform at Cooper Union at the Free Speech Meeting next Wednesday, but you'll never catch Darby there. He

says that he'll attend any meeting advocating restriction upon speech. He's an awful conservative, really; he belongs in the Georgian period. He ought to have been a Tory English squire, poor dear! And to think of his being married to a radical like me!"

"That"—the doctor compressed her lips grimly—"is the way in which your truly independent married female makes her truly independence pull in double harness with the wifely quotation habit."

"Anyway," said the hostess feebly, "I don't believe that women go about complaining seriously of their husbands the way they used to do—the unhappily married ones, I mean."

"It's very obvious that you've never been a physician attending upon the unhappily married ones," observed the doctor acidulously. "I know all about the shortcomings and the foibles of dozens of men. I know how mean they are about money, and how given they are to antepandial cocktails at the club. I know that they don't care for anything but musical comedy when their high-minded wives are mad for the Wagnerian ring. I know that they gamble and lose the price of a velvet opera cloak every week, and yet are exceedingly stern over legitimate dress expenditures. And sometimes I know things more serious yet, which I haven't the slightest desire to know, and which it does me no good to know. Don't believe that the unhappily married woman, the disillusioned wife, has learned the grace of silence in regard to her lot. For the matter of that, divorce statistics show that she has done nothing of the sort. She proclaims her wrongs more vociferously than ever in the world's history. You wouldn't call a suit for divorce anything less than a complaint about husbands, would you?"

"Well," demanded the hostess impatiently, "what's the upshot of the whole affair?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," replied the doctor. "Sometimes I think that when women have more individual share in the world, when they have got farther away from the old-fashioned view that they are their husband's chattels, they may learn to forget their husbands in general conversation. It's a mental relic of slavery, really, this eternal absorption in a person. Slaves, I have no doubt, were vastly more given to discussing their masters' whims and characters than masters were to discussing those of their slaves! So sometimes I think a longer period of independence on the part of women will

help to give us better conversation. And sometimes I think that nothing will do it but the abolition of marriage and the social recognition of free love."

They all laughed a little at this, in tribute to their puritanical doctor's taste for verbal extravagance. But she insisted upon remaining serious.

"And when I think," she pursued impressively, "that free love might mean the disappearance of the husband from women's conversation, I am almost tempted to become a believer in that doctrine! I am almost tempted to believe that the world would gain more than it would lose in that case!"



FANCY

I SAIL on a sunbeam to greet you,
I whisper in silvery rain,
On the wings of the wind I come near you,
Though you seek me and call me in vain.

On a moonbeam I slip to your pillow,
I drift on a cloud through your dream.
I am rocked on the breast of the billow;
I am one with the fast-flowing stream.

You may catch, as I flit through the woodland,
The shine of my wings in the shade.
'Tis the sound of my voice in the thunder
That shall thrill you and make you afraid.

I am old as the hills, and as hoary
As the rocks by creation uphurled.
I am young as all youth; and all beauty
Is mine, through the width of the world.

I ride on a rose petal falling;
I sing in the hum of the bee;
I am here—I am there—I have vanished.
I am Fancy. I, only, am free!

WINIFRED RIPLEY DEFORREST.

Giuseppe's Bambino Saves the Day

By Virginia Middleton

Author of "Emperors Have Done Less," "Making Over Mark," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY MAYO BUNKER

A motherless little Italian baby strangely decides the course of Katy Ryan's life. A story of real human being characters.

KATY had been rather scornful when she had learned that Giuseppe Solari had moved into the tenement. It marked the beginning of deterioration, or, as she expressed it: "Gee, the place must be getting on the bum, with the dagos moving in!" Katy was Irish from the top of her bright-red head to the soles of as light a pair of feet as ever scuffed up a settlement-house floor in a dance. Added to her invincible Milesian pride of race was the pride of the young woman who had just begun her commercial career in Rosenbaum's glove department, at five dollars a week. It was a mighty combination.

But friendliness was almost as strong in Katy as was pride. However scornful she might be of the modern descendants of Romulus and Remus, she was all warm interest when it came to a wedding, even an Italian wedding. It became apparent, a week or two after Giuseppe had moved into the Jones Street house, that he had engaged his abode in expectation of no less an event than taking Bianca to wife. Quite unconscious of Katy's superiority, he told her all about it when he stepped across the three-foot strip of oilcloth that divided his flat from Katy's mother's and asked for a little feminine advice in regard to the disposition of his two rooms. Mrs. Ryan was out, and it fell to Katy's lot to talk with him.

"I furnish her nice," he told Katy.

"I save up. I save up two—three year. I send the money home for Bianca, and I take the flat. She get in Friday. I want everything nice. I want some lady, that she help me."

"Sure, I'll help you!" said Katy cheerfully and efficiently. "What do you want to know? Where to hang the picture of the King of Italy, or where to put up the cookstove, or what?"

They stepped across into the two rooms, which commanded an inspiring view of some of Jones Street's back yards, surmounted by tall tenements, and Giuseppe indicated his helplessness before the problem of arrangement. Katy, to tell the truth, felt equally helpless, but she had a bright idea.

"I tell you what," she said cheerfully. "This girl of yours—what did you say her name was?—she ought to do her own fixing. All that you need to do is to get the stove up and the kitchen table set close to it and the bed— Where in the world did you get that whale? I never saw a bed that size in all my born days! There won't be room for a bureau—"

Giuseppe interrupted her with a flood of broken English. Katy put her hands to her ears.

"Hold, hold, enough, as they say to the vordeville!" she exclaimed. "I don't understand dago, even mixed. Say it in English, can't you?"

Young Mr. Solari laughed, to show

that he appreciated an attempt at wit, and looked extremely anxious, to indicate that he was pained at his own lack of English. And then, very slowly and painstakingly, he began to explain to her that the bed had to be large enough to display fittingly a piece of needlework, upon which, it seemed, Bianca had been engaged for the greater part of her seventeen years—a crocheted bedspread of gigantic proportions. It formed the chief part of his fiancée's setting out, it seemed, and she was conveying it in a bundle that held all her possessions as she traversed the Atlantic.

"Did you ever hear the like of that?" Katy addressed the somewhat greasy walls of the tenement. "Crocheting a bedspread! By hand! When you can get 'em for ninety-eight cents at Slacey's, and at eighty-nine at Rosenbaum's! Gee, time must have hung heavy on her hands 'o drive her to that! Say, weren't there no shows for her to see over there?"

Giuseppe shook his head and smiled, showing a great many white teeth; and Mrs. Ryan, returning at that moment and seeing the flaming poll of her eldest daughter in the dim interior of the opposite flat, stepped in herself and put



"Hold, hold, enough!" she exclaimed. "I don't understand dago, even mixed. Say it in English, can't you?"

an end to the colloquy for the time being. With efficient gesture, she showed Giuseppe what to do with his household belongings, and even managed to convey to him the impression that it would be agreeable to have pleasant neighbors.

The wedding was held from Giuseppe's new abode. Although Bianca had relatives on Carmine Street, it was decided that their quarters were too crowded to do justice to the ceremony. And thus it was that Katy Ryan had the felicity of serving as bridesmaid to the slim, appealing little creature, all big, dark eyes and friendly, smiling,

imitative lips that strove, with many a pretty little *moue*, to master the intricacies of the new language. She was a lovely little thing, was Bianca, and Katy said that she herself felt like nothing less than a giraffe beside her, overtopping her as she did by half a head.

"My hands are hams to hers," declared the Irish girl disgustedly. "Hers are dark—dark as a light-complected nigger's, but gee"—breaking into her favorite exclamation—"ain't they slim? You feel kind of as if you were taking hold of a bird! Did you see those pretty corals she's got? '*Antica*' she calls it. They was her mother's, and her mother's before that. Worn just as smooth from all their Italian necks! Her grandmother fastened them on her mother's neck when she was married, and her mother fastened them on Bianca's the day she sailed—"

"My, but it's wonderful the way you can understand her!" exclaimed Mrs. Ryan admiringly. "I wish you could have gone to school longer. There's no language you wouldn't be able to understand with a little study."

"Well," admitted Katy honestly, "Giuseppe helped some. Didn't she look pretty, dressed in that sleazy satin, with all that tarlatan veil around her? Hired, they were, you know, both of them. There's a place around under the elevated on West Fourth Street where the dagos hire their grand clothes whenever they want them. My, but she seems a nice little thing, for all she's a foreigner!"

"Some of them foreigners are very nice and self-respecting," declared Mrs. Ryan broad-mindedly.

The acquaintance thus inaugurated was pleasantly maintained for a year. Never had the Jones Street tenement known more agreeable tenants than the young Solaris, so peaceful, so anxious to please, so intent upon learning were they. Katy, though still condescending in her soul as one who belonged to a

superior order, was, nevertheless, very friendly with Bianca. She was not able to devote a great deal of time to the young Italian girl's education, for Katy was not only a business woman and her mother's strong prop in the perpetual warfare that Mrs. Ryan waged against existence with a husband who divided his time with great impartiality between thirty days of drinking at home and thirty days of recuperating on the Island, but she was also a belle. She loved gayety. No matter how tired her feet were after a day at Rosenbaum's, poised upon the thinnest of soles and the highest of heels—for Katy held that it was no use to be a dowdy just because you are a working girl—they always underwent a miraculous cure if some one said, "Dance!" The "movies" and vaudeville knew no more devoted patron than young Miss Ryan. She was a good girl, and each week she brought home her wages, unbroken, to her mother, but she "had a way with her," and that way coerced invitations for the gayeties that she loved from the youth of her acquaintance.

Still, whenever she was at home "of an evening," she liked nothing better than to drop in upon the Solaris. She tasted their Italian dishes, with many frank and exclamatory expressions in regard to the Italian palate; she studied the lineaments of Victor Emmanuel and of Queen Margherita, portrayed in the brightest colors of the lithographer's art, and gave her candid opinion in regard to their royal appearances. She went sometimes with Bianca to market, and sometimes to church. And she gave it out to the other dwellers in the tenement, as her mature judgment, that, despite the handicap of race, the Solaris were two as nice little people as you would see in a day's journey.

One night Katy came home to find her father, a tremulous wreck of a man, installed by the kitchen stove. Katy and her father did not "get

And then suddenly she broke into a little torrent of Italian exclamation, and, putting down her work, ran to Katy's side and put her arms about her, for Katy, the efficient, the gay, the stalwart, the invincible, had burst out crying.



a long." Katy was in the habit of advising her mother, during the paternal absences, to move, to disappear, to leave Mr. Ryan in the lurch, in short. She was quite honestly unable to understand the wife's loyalty, and reluctance to adopt her suggestion, or how it could be that this man was her own father. However, she had the habit of accepting

things as they were, and her compromise between her own private view of the matter and her mother's refusal to accede to it was to absent herself as much as possible whenever Barney Ryan was at home.

On this particular evening, the sight

of him was more than unusually unpleasant to Katy's bright eyes. Such a mean, doddering derelict of a man! And Katy's eyes had been filled with a vision of quite another sort of male human being—with a vision of Mr. Albert Fenwick, of Rosenbaum's. She was a hard-headed young person, and she was learned in all the wisdom that an early tussle with poverty gives to the young. She was aware—for was she not a devoted attendant upon the movies?—that the floorwalker is, of all the temptations placed in the path of the shopgirl, the most dangerous. Until Mr. Fenwick dawned upon her horizon, she would have said that, for a sensible girl, a man might as well wear hoofs and horns as to admit the calling of floorwalker. But Albert Fenwick was different.

In the first place, although he now wore garments of impeccable cut and fabric, there were those in the store who remembered him in patches. For Albert had begun his mercantile career as one of the boy "cashes." And, although his hands now bore some evidence of acquaintance with the manicure, there were those who remembered a pair of grimy paws, chapped by the cold and bloody from combat with another boy "cash." Albert, in short, was one of themselves. He was not the dark and sinister being from another sphere that the floorwalker of movie romance was.

Those good clothes that Albert wore clothed a form youthful and lithe, not the stout, middle-aged body of the experienced tempter of tradition. Albert's well-polished boots of tan or black covered feet that knew how to dance. Albert's smile was the smile of a friend and a human being, not of an agent of the devil.

Albert, it will be seen, was the most dangerous sort of temptation that could arise in any girl's path, for he wore

none of the legendary earmarks of the tempter.

Except that Albert was married.

Katy had not been long enough on the force at Rosenbaum's to have had the felicity of contributing part of her five dollars a week toward the purchase of a present for Albert on the occasion of his nuptials. But she heard about the gift whenever one of those who had contributed toward it had occasion to find fault with any of Mr. Fenwick's official rulings. She had heard, too, about Mrs. Fenwick—Lillie Schmitt that was. Lillie had been no such favorite as was Albert. She had been buyer of blouses and lingerie as far back as the days when Albert had been struggling up out of the cash class.

"Old enough to be his mother," had been the somewhat exaggerated criticism of the shop when the engagement had been announced. By the time Katy came upon the carpet, they sometimes said that Mrs. Fenwick was old enough to be his grandmother; but that was only in moments of extreme irritation.

And this afternoon, when Katy came home to find the poor, weak, wrecked presentment of a man cowering beside the kitchen stove, Albert had overtaken her as she had left the store and had walked with her to her own corner. And Albert lived, as she knew very well, not anywhere in this low neighborhood of Jones Street, but among the varnished splendors of upper West Side flatdom. Somehow, the sight of her father was more than she could stand. After giving him the curtest of greetings, she made some excuse for leaving the kitchen and crossed to the Solari abode. Bianca was sewing; Bianca was generally sewing in these days. And though Katy's eyes were somber and unseeing for a while, by and by she became aware of the fact that it was baby clothes that Bianca was making.

The sight of the little garments stirred her strangely, made her terribly

unhappy. Confusedly, it related itself to that ruin in her own kitchen, to Albert Fenwick, probably even now swinging to a strap on the elevated, as he went uptown to his Lillie. It related itself to all the unknown, deep, compelling forces of life. She was not given to sentimental expression.

"Gee! A kid! Well, who'd have thought it? You're not much more than a kid yourself." Among Katy's superiorities to Bianca, she counted two years of seniority.

"A bambino," murmured Bianca, dark eyes shining like stars, pale lips curved in a smile of infinite sweetness. And then suddenly she broke into a little torrent of Italian exclamation, and, putting down her work, ran to Katy's side and put her arms about her, for Katy, the efficient, the gay, the stalwart, the invincible, had burst out crying.

"Did you ever see a fool like me?" demanded Miss Ryan fiercely, after the tempest had passed. "I declare I don't know what's the matter with me. I suppose it was seeing my old man over there—he's home again. Ain't it something fierce, having a husband like that? But I don't know when I cried before. What's that you called the baby?"

"Bambino," replied Bianca soothingly.

Katy repeated the word.

"I tell you what I'll do," she said. "I'll stand godmother to it if you want me to. But maybe you'd rather have some of your own people?" The last sentence was a little wistful.

"No, no, no!" Mrs. Solari was all eager assurance. "You! You are—*mia amica*—how you call it?—my friend, my best friend. Dear to me like Lucia, my best friend at home. You shall be godmother to the bambino."

"It'll be all right," said Katy, recovering her sang-froid, "as long as we

are both Catholics, even if you're a da—Italian."

So it was arranged, and Katy, when three more months were spent, broke a Sunday-afternoon appointment to meet Albert Fenwick at the entrance to Bronx Park in order to hold a very much swathed baby at the christening font at Our Lady of Pompeii's and renounce for him the devil and all his works. Bianca was not there. The baby was only a few days old, anyhow, and, besides, Bianca was not making as swift a recovery from her trial as might have been wished.

And then events began to happen with tragic swiftness in Katy's life. There was no doubt any longer in her own mind about how she felt in regard to Albert Fenwick; there was not even any question as to how he felt about her. His unhappiness at home, his longing for the spirited, red-haired Irish girl, were wearing deep circles under his pleasant eyes and were hollowing out his cheeks. Albert had been too busy making a success of life during his preceding thirty-two years ever to have really fallen in love. Marrying Miss Schmitt had been chance, and Miss Schmitt's determination. But now he was in love. And Katy knew it and loved in return.

As if that were not enough, Mrs. Ryan, that incomprehensible woman who had clung through so many years to the drunkard whom the lottery of marriage had assigned to her, who had somehow managed to bring Katy up to be sensible and self-respecting in the dingiest and most sordid of surroundings—Mrs. Ryan fell ill. Fifteen years of office scrubbing is, perhaps, not conducive to strong lungs. The chill of the early-morning streets, the clamminess of marble stairs, the dampness of buildings before the early-morning steam heat has been turned on—all these probably had their bearing upon her pneumonia.



"What's it all about?" asked Katy, thrusting herself determinedly into the throng.

At any rate, on the very day when Bianca, with the light of unutterable love in her eyes, looked her last upon her husband and the bambino, Mrs. Ryan also gave her last choking gasp on earth. The two funerals moved away from the tenement on the same day. And Katy was left with her mother's dying charge ringing in her ears: "Don't go back on your father."

That charge kept her straight through the next few tempestuous weeks. She had to obey her mother, dead or alive; the habit of obedience was too strong to be broken. And it was obviously impossible to take care of her father and at the same time to adopt that wonder-

ful suggestion of Albert's. This was that she should go to live in a place of his providing, and allow Lillie, the jealous, to obtain a divorce. It might mean his discharge from Rosenbaum's, for there was some sort of a family connection between Lillie and the head of the firm; but he was a man now experienced in business, and he could command his own price anywhere. Lillie would never stand for an open flouting of her claims, he assured Katy, but neither would she ever release him until she had been openly flouted. And Katy, although her religious training made Albert's suggestion of a marriage after divorce seem almost as immoral as no

marriage at all, would have yielded but that she had to take care of the "old man."

And then one day the old man relieved her of any further duties in the matter by walking off a pier, either in a fit of alcoholic abstraction or because he really meant to do it. And Katy moved out from the flat and took a room with another girl from Rosenbaum's and grew gaunt and hollow-eyed from the combined effects of gas-jet cooking and of longing to do what Albert desired her to do.

She used to go to see her little godson two or three times a week. She found him infinitely amusing. Never having had younger sisters and brothers, all the commonplaces of babyhood were marvelous to her. An old Italian woman of Giuseppe's kin presided over his forlorn establishment and took care of the baby. She and Katy had long conversations in regard to him, gaining the most peculiar ideas of each other's views on the rearing of infants, for one of them spoke no Italian and the other no English. Still, they were very friendly together, and the hours that she spent with Giuseppe, junior, were about the brightest that she knew during this period of her existence. For the hours spent with Albert in parks, in little restaurants, in shows, though ecstatic in one sense, were miserable in another.

"It isn't as if your mother were living," Albert said to her earnestly, as they sat under a tree in the Bronx one Sunday in May. "I didn't ask you to do it then. Not that I think there is anything really wrong about it, you know, but I had an old mother, and she had daughters, and I know how she would have felt. But she's gone—your mother, I mean—and that old man of yours, too. There's no one to suffer. There isn't a soul belonging to you that can be hurt by anything you do—and I—Katy, I think I'll die if you don't

come to me. Don't you trust me? Don't you believe me? Do you think I am just one of these villains out of a movie play?"

"No," faltered Katy, with trembling lips. "I don't think that. I know you're not like that. If you were, it would be a good deal easier." She smiled a crooked little smile.

"What would be easier?"

"It would be a lot easier to send you about your business," Katy elucidated her meaning. "Oh, I don't know what to do!"

"If you really care about me the way you say you do—" began Albert, but Katy stopped him.

"Suppose she—you know, your wife"—she always blushed when she spoke the words, and jerked them out as if they came hard—"suppose she didn't get a divorce?"

"But she will, she will! You don't know Lillie. She wouldn't stand for it for a minute. Honestly, much as I love you, Katy, I wouldn't do anything that would really hurt her. But nothing will really hurt her. She doesn't care a rap for me, except for what I bring in. She'd rather have alimony without me than her income with me. I know it. I don't think she ever cared anything about me except as a meal ticket. Oh, when I think what a young fool I was!"

Katy put her hand upon his knee with a gesture of sympathy. She hated to see him suffer. He caught the work-roughened little hand in his own, and she felt the blood pulsing in his fingers. She sighed wearily. It seemed too much of a battle for one small girl to conduct—this battle for the perfectly useless conventions against all the forces of spring and youth!

"I'll do it, Albert!" she cried suddenly. "We've got to take chances in this world to get anywhere. I'll have to keep my room with Dora for another week, and then— Oh, you'll be good

to me, won't you? You'll be true to me?"

She caught his hands in a grip of steel and searched his soul with her eyes. He gave a great sob and lifted the little hands to his lips.

"I swear it, I swear it!"

She ought to have been very happy, having made the decision to seize upon happiness, but she was not; there was a curious numbness in her heart, a chill. She told herself that she was tired—tired of the long struggle, tired of misery, of grinding poverty. She told herself that all these things would be passed for her when the week was passed, and that she could set out on a fresh path. But she was not able to arouse any enthusiasm in herself at the thought.

She went to see Bianca's baby one evening toward the close of the week. Poor Bianca! She knew instinctively how Bianca's dark eyes would have filled with tears if she could have heard of Katy's decision. And how Bianca's lips would have firmly held themselves closed over any criticisms or reproaches!

"She knew how to be a real friend!" said Katy to herself. "What did she call it? *Amica*—that was it; '*mia amica*'—that was what she called me. I wonder what that Lucia over there in Italy is like? I wonder how soon will Giuseppe get him another wife to look after the bambino?"

There was great excitement in Giuseppe's flat, which seemed to overflow with Neapolitans of the neighborhood. The hubbub was audible for a block down the street.

"What's it all about?" asked Katy, thrusting herself determinedly into the throng. Giuseppe, who was being embraced by half a dozen of his fellow countrymen, at once untangled himself

and explained with a great rush of words. He was called home to fight. He was called home to fight the hated Austrians. *Bella Italia! Patria!* And various other things.

"Are you going to take the baby with you?" demanded Katy.

"No, no, no!" Giuseppe was emphatic. "My boy, Bianca's boy—the bambino—he an Americano! No war, no army—Americano!"

"Who's going to take care of him?" asked Katy.

There was the most curious pounding in her veins and buzzing in her ears. There were dancing spots of brightness before her eyes. Her cheeks felt very hot, her hands very cold. She was in the grip of a great idea; she was on the verge of a great adventure.

Giuseppe indicated despair in two languages and two hundred motions. Out of the midst of it all, Katy discerned the idea "asylum."

"Nothing of the sort!" cried the young adventuress. "He's my godson—he'll be my bambino till you come back. If you never come back—Come, let's fix up some papers so that he'll be mine for good! You can pay me whatever you were going to pay the old lady here."

Babel followed. But when babel quieted down, Katy knew that she was to have her way. The ghost of Bianca smiled radiantly upon her. The numb, chill feeling of days passed departed. She glowed, she laughed, she felt a desire to dance such as she had not felt for months.

She retired to the corner drug store and purchased a sheet of paper and an envelope.

I can't do it, Albert. I've got somebody now it would make a difference to. If it ever is fixed so I can come to you right, I'm coming with a ready-made family. KATE.





The Resurrected Miniature

By Edith Summers Updegraff

Author of "The Primrose Party Dress," "The Skeleton in the Closet," etc.

It happened at St. Agatha's Boarding School—a wonderfully romantic discovery and some thoroughly delightful schoolgirls.

HELLO, what's this?"

"Looks to me extremely like the head of a nail," said Hyacinth.

"It's something more than that," maintained Kate, getting down on her knees on the old, worn, wide-boarded floor and prodding with her slender, flexible thumb at an ordinary-looking nail head. "It's some kind of a spring. There's a little groove here that it moves in—if one could only persuade it to move. There, now, didn't I tell you?" she added triumphantly.

Sure enough, as she pressed her intent lips together and put all her strength into an especially vigorous jab with her thumb, that apparently stationary nail head did move a quarter of an inch or so down into the wood. At the same moment a part of the floor at least five feet away from the nail head suddenly and weirdly lifted itself up in the manner of a lid on hinges, leaving in the floor an open space some three feet long and two feet wide.

"Suffering Sophronia, I'll eat my shirt if it isn't a secret chest!" exclaimed Kate, and rushed to the spot, followed by the other two of us.

It was a cold, wet Sunday afternoon in October, and Kate, Hyacinth, and I, instead of "reading and meditating the Scriptures" as we were supposed to be

doing and as that dear, conscientious Theodosia *was* actually doing, were busily exploring the attic. Now the attic of St. Agatha's is a weird and wonderful place, ghostly with dust-covered chests and patchwork quilts and dormer windows and cobwebs and disabled furniture and crumbling bunches of dried herbs and old-fashioned pictures in atrocious frames and faded, musty garments of many different vintages. You know, the central part of St. Agatha's used to be an old colonial family mansion before it became a "select school for young ladies"; and a good deal of the flavor of the old family mansion still lingers about its cellar and attic and narrow passages and concealed cupboards and all its queer and unexpected nooks and corners.

As I was saying, the three of us made one grand stampede for the secret chest. But our disappointment was as keen as had been our expectations when we found that there was nothing in it.

We were just about to turn sadly away when hope rose again at the sound of a sudden exclamation from Hyacinth, who had been having a last feel in the corners; and the next moment she triumphantly held up to the light a small, flat, oval object. The small, flat, oval object, when carried to one of the cobweb-curtained windows and exam-

ined, turned out to be a miniature. And such a miniature! It was on ivory in an ebony frame, and it represented a youth after Hyacinth's own sentiment-swamped heart. He was apparently not much more than twenty, and his style of dress, as nearly as we could judge, was of the latter half of the eighteenth century—wide, flaring collar, frilled waistcoat, and all that sort of thing.

But it was the face of the young man that made the miniature a thing of beauty and preciousness. The best points of Lord Byron and the youthful Goethe and seven carefully selected matinée heroes all rolled into one couldn't have made up a countenance more classic, more poetic, more romantic, more magnetic, more every other attractive "ic" than the one that shone forth from the ivory miniature after Hyacinth had wiped the dust off of it with her second-best handkerchief.

"Finder keeper," said Kate, with a slight sigh, as she turned away from a lengthy examination of the miniature. "Besides, Hyacinth's the one who'll appreciate it most. She can add him to her other conquests—along with my lost electrician."

"What do you mean?" asked Hyacinth, opening her innocent brown eyes very wide.

"What do I mean? Why, drat your hair bows, Hy, I mean that you're a greedy pig, besides being a mean cat and a wily little fox and a dog in the manger. Fact, there's a whole zoölogical garden all bundled up in your small person."

These remarks, though they don't look complimentary in print, carried no sting; for they were said with such lightness and good nature that even the most touchy couldn't have taken offense at them.

"Why?" asked Hyacinth simply.

"Why? You know derved well why! You're not satisfied with annexing all

the handsome and fascinating young men who cross your path, but you must needs go and butt in and lure away my modest choice. And it isn't as if you wanted him. He simply falls a helpless sacrifice to your overweening passion for monopolizing the whole sex male."

"Why, what have I done?" asked Hyacinth, as meek and innocent as ever.

"What have you done? You've looked at him out of those big, doggy brown eyes of yours. And jerry well you know it's all you need to do! Nothing that's male and human can resist one of those looks, and nobody knows it better than the looker. And the unsugared pill of it is that if you hadn't noticed my weakness for that scrawny, nearsighted, long-legged youth up at the electric-light plant, he never would have got as much as one squint from you. But, of course, as soon as you saw that somebody else was a little soft on him, the Old Lilith in you woke right up—she wasn't very sound asleep, either—and whispered in your ear that you wouldn't be happy till you got him."

"But goodness me," said Hyacinth, "even if we grant, just for argument's sake, that I *did* look at him, he's free to choose, isn't he?"

"Nobody's free to choose where you're concerned," answered Kate. "You're too beautiful—and you know it."

They were a queer pair—Kate and Hyacinth. Hyacinth Smith's nickname in the school was "Beauty," and her roommate, Kate Conway, answered to the name of "Brains." Beauty and Brains lived together in "The Hen-coop" away up at the far end of "Pie Alley." Nobody knew and everybody wondered how it had ever occurred to either of them to room with the other, for they seemed to have absolutely nothing in common except the fact that they were both sloppy. Neither of them had ever been known to take a darning needle in hand before her feet fell

through the holes in her stockings. And as for The Hencoop, it was always one seething chaos of clothes, books, umbrellas, papers, hats, photographs, shoes, banners, fish nets, and eatables, all mixed up higglety-pigglety like patches in a scrap bag. This sloppiness was, to all appearances, the only tie that bound the two girls together, and Heaven knows they were anything but mutually complimentary. But yet there seemed to be some strange attraction, even affection, between them. Anybody who interfered with their partnership in any way got about as much thanks for his pains as the cheerful idiot who butts in between a husband and wife.

Some girls can afford to be sloppy, and some can't. Both Beauty and Brains could afford it, though for widely different reasons. Beauty was such an absolutely perfect brown-eyed, golden-haired bit of exquisiteness that she would have looked like an angel in a gunny sack and a Salvation Army bonnet. And Brains, though she could lay no particular claim to good looks, had so much fire in her restless dark eyes and so much going on in her restless little dark head and so many quaint and witty and ingenious things to say with her restless tongue that nobody ever noticed or cared what she had on.

It was a day or two after the finding of the miniature that Theodosia and I dropped into The Hencoop during recreation hour, in answer to an invitation to partake of homemade tarts. We found Kate and Hyacinth in kimonos and a high state of excitement. Hyacinth was holding the miniature in her hand and looking at it with big, velvet brown eyes that were at once scared and complacent.

"Great goin's-on gals," said Kate. "Hy's dug up a new affinity that's the real thing in affinities. No cheap, common variety, believe me!"

"Oh, Kate, how can you talk so flip-

pantly about it," reproved Hyacinth, "when it's such an extraordinary and such a serious thing?"

"My dear, I admit that flippancy is my besetting sin. But you've got enough seriousness for two, just as you've got enough good looks for two. Now hurry up and show the girls your prize package and see what *they* think about it."

"Kate has discovered that the back comes off," said Hyacinth, "and this is what we found inside."

She handed me the ebony back of the miniature. Theodosia stuck her head over my shoulder, and our two pairs of eyes bugged out simultaneously as we read the following startling legend:

She I love will some day be
Fast united unto me.
She is fair as flower bell,
Softly tinted like a shell.
Brown her eyes as coffee berry;
Gold her hair as sunbeam merry.
Round her arm a slender ring
Like a narrow thread doth cling.
Though I seek her from the grave,
Her and her alone I'll have.
She I love will some day be
Fast united unto me.

"Well, that's positively the weirdest thing I ever heard of!" I gasped, staring at the faded, delicately traced characters.

"Isn't it?" assented Kate. "There couldn't have been a more accurate description of Hy if she'd been wanted by the police in a murder case."

Then, of course, we all had to have a good rubber at Hyacinth, as if we had never seen her in our lives before. We looked at the coffee-brown eyes, the pale-gold hair, the shell-like complexion. And then, with one accord, our eyes glued themselves upon her unique birthmark, a slender, bracelet-like line that extended all the way around her left arm a little above the wrist. Poor Hy began to wiggle uneasily.

"Seems to me I've got a vague recollection," mused Kate, "of an old ballad that tells how a young man came riding through the storm and the night to his sweetheart's door, and made her get up out of bed and onto the back of his horse, pretending they were going to the minister's, and then galloped off plunkety-plunk to the graveyard. A dirty trick, if you ask me."

"Yes," said Theodosia, "I think his name was William."

"And her name was Helen, if I remember rightly," I added, anxious to show that I, too, was not without some knowledge of ballad literature. "It was an awfully gruesome poem."

"Oh, shut up your mouths, you horrid, mean things!" broke in Hyacinth suddenly, and burst into a flood of hysterical tears. "Anyway," she added, recovering herself somewhat after a few seconds and allowing complacency to get the better of fear, "you needn't get to feeling so cocky. William wouldn't have bothered his head about any of *you*."

"Not a bit," assented Kate cheerfully; "not any more than my once devoted electrician now muses on me."

"Oh, pshaw, you can have your old electrician, for all of me!" snapped Hyacinth. "I never intend to take the slightest notice of him again."

"Well, I suppose now that you have William—or perhaps one would be speaking more accurately to say now that William has you—you *may* have less time and attention to spend on scrawny, nearsighted, long-legged electricians."

From that time on, the miniature was known as "William."

"I wonder if Kate really cares anything about that queer-looking young electrician?" said Theodosia to me, as we were getting ready for bed that night.

"Impossible to be sure," I answered. "Kate's such a complicated puzzle—ex-

cuse unintentional pun—that there's no nailing her. But my own private opinion is that she's clean daffy about him, and the fact that Hy has gone and alienated his affections means a whole lot more to her than you or I or anybody else imagines. I never knew Kate to take the slightest notice of a man before. She's awfully still water about men, and I'm afraid she's deeper than we think."

"But how can she keep on caring for him when he's shown himself so fickle?"

"Theo, my trusty pal, it's just as Kate herself says. It isn't his fault; he has no choice in the matter. There's something positively uncanny about the way Hy can attract men. They'd have burned her for a witch in the old days."

The rest of October slipped away in a succession of glorious blue-and-gold days, and Hallowe'en drew near. It was interesting to notice how the miniature affected Hyacinth, after the first shock of its strange message had worn away. At first it was pretty much of a drawn battle between fear and complacency. But gradually complacency got the better of fear, and she forgot the danger of being carried off to the graveyard by William in her self-satisfaction at the thought that anybody so handsome and distinguished had singled her out in such a remarkable way. This self-satisfaction led her to be even more coquettishly disposed toward the electrician than she had been before. Her rash vow never to take the slightest notice of him again was sweetly forgotten, as we all knew it would be, and he was as warm molasses taffy in her hands. Kate retired definitely from the field.

Of course, the whole school had made most elaborate preparations for Hallowe'en. Taffy was to be made and pulled, chestnuts were to be roasted, apples were to be ducked for, parings were to be thrown over shoulders, and all the other good, old-time practices

gone through with. I won't attempt to deny that the most interesting observations to most of us were those that have to do with the discovery of the identity of future husbands. There was one particular custom of this sort that had been a part of St. Agatha's Hallowe'en frolics ever since the oldest teacher could remember—and, believe me, that was a long time!—but it required so much nerve that there were never more than half a dozen girls in the whole school who could be induced to try it. The girl who wished to see the face of her future husband was required to place a sheet over her head and take an unlighted candle in her left hand and a match in her right. Then she must grope her way along up the attic stairs and into a certain corner where hung an old, cracked, greenish-hued mirror. When she discovered, by groping for it, that she was in front of the mirror, she must throw aside the sheet, strike the match, light the candle with it, and look into the mirror over her left shoulder. If everything went well, and the Fates were propitious, she would see in the mirror the face of her future husband.

There were cases on record of girls who *had* actually seen the faces of their future husbands. But cases of those who hadn't were much more common. This, however, was because the future husband was a shy and elusive creature, who refused to show himself unless the most exacting conditions had been scrupulously complied with. The sheet must not be removed for one second before the critical moment. The candle must remain in the left hand and the match in the right. The first glimpse into the mirror must be over the left shoulder. Otherwise nothing would happen.

I forgot to mention that if the match failed to take fire or went out before the candle could be lighted, the intruder into the future was to remain an old

maid. It was remarkable what a large proportion of foredoomed old maids descended sadly from the attic. And I've always suspected that their number was even greater than reports would seem to show.

"Who's going up into the attic to see her future husband?" was the general question on the fateful night, when all the other stunts that everybody could think of had been tried.

"Not me! Not me! Not me!" came emphatically and ungrammatically from all sides.

"You go."

"Aw, no—you."

"I tried it last year and nearly died of heart failure before I got halfway up the stairs."

"I *know* the match would go out."

"I wouldn't go up into that boogerish place alone for all the husbands that ever breathed," declared Vivian Pringle.

"Nor I—not if they were all as handsome as William," declared Jacqueline Baker, with more decision than I had ever known her to show in her life before.

"I tell you what, girls, if it's up to anybody in this school to try the attic stunt," cried Kate, climbing upon a chair to make her speech, "it's up to Hyacinth Smith. I'm sure you'll all agree with me that she should neglect no opportunity to locate the permanent victim, so that henceforth she may be in favor of a policy of concentration rather than diffusion."

"I won't do anything of the sort!" pouted Hyacinth, retiring into a corner.

And then the teasing began: "Ah, Hy, be a sport!" "Show you've got some gumption, Hy." "You owe it to the community, Hy." The very girls who had been most emphatic in refusing to go themselves were, of course, the ones who were most persistent in their arguments to persuade Hyacinth to go. It was the sort of teasing that

you have to have a will of iron to resist, and Hyacinth was not encumbered with any will of iron.

"I'm going up myself, just for the fun of the thing. And if you like, I'll go first, to start the ball a-rollin'," volunteered Kate. "If Hy won't go after I do, she's no true roommate."

Poor Hyacinth, who had been steadily weakening under fire, toppled over at this final coup and promised to go—after Kate.

We lost no time in fitting out Kate for the fateful trip. It didn't take long to get her started—sheet, candle, match, and all; and then there was the tense and breathless wait for her to come down again. It probably wasn't more than a few minutes, but it seemed like several hours, before we heard her Cuban heels on the stairs.

"Who was it, Kate? The electrician?"

"Not on your cabinet-size photograph! Single blessedness is to be my peaceful lot. The unfeeling match went out before it got to within a half mile of the candle. Here, Hy, here's the sheet and things. Now don't you dare to try to fake it, or the goblins'll git ye."

Poor Hyacinth went as white as the sheet we draped over her; and the candle and the match, when she took them in her hands, seemed to be stricken simultaneously with a sudden fit of St. Vitus dance. Like most highly ornamental people, Hy was not conspicuous for qualities like nerve and pluck and enterprise.

At last, however, we got her reluctant feet started on the attic stairs, and immediately began looking around for another likely victim. We had halfway persuaded Vivian Pringle that she ought to try it, when Hyacinth came back.

She came back suddenly and quite dramatically. First there was a wild shriek of simon-pure terror, then a frantic clatter of feet across the attic

floor and down the steep attic stairs, and she stood among us, her face the color of ashes, her eyes sticking out of her head, her lower jaw hanging loose, her knees knocking together, her hands twitching, and her whole body trembling violently. The sheet, the candle, and the match had been left behind in her wild flight, and there was a long tear from shoulder to waist in the back of her pink muslin dress.

Of course, we all crowded around her and demanded with one voice to know what had happened. But poor Hy was too far gone to tell. Kate and Theo and I finally managed to get her away from the crowd and into her own room, where we laid her on the bed. There she lay, limp and gasping, until half a wineglassful of brandy, supplied by the housekeeper, began to take effect.

"What scared you so, Hy?" asked Kate, solicitously fanning the pale face, as Hyacinth struggled weakly to a sitting position on the edge of the bed and stared vaguely about the familiar room.

The look of terror returned to her eyes, and the color that had begun to come back to her cheeks faded out again.

"D-don't ask me," she stammered "It—it was too horrible!" and she fell back on the bed, shuddering convulsively.

"Now, look here, Hy," admonished Kate, with tonic severity, "don't go to talking in that idiotic way, and don't go to doing fits and conniptions all over the place. We've got to know what it was that frightened the wits out of you, so we can do something about it, and do it quick. Don't do the baby act. Speak up like a grown woman in your senses and tell what you saw."

"A—a skeleton!" whispered Hyacinth, shuddering and hiding her face in her hands at the recollection.

"What kind of a skeleton?" asked Kate, in her most matter-of-fact tone.

"Oh, a horrible skeleton! It had something gray draped around its head, and there was dark-colored stuff in its eye sockets that looked like earth. And when I looked into the mirror over my left shoulder, that was what I saw. And when I turned to run, something reached out and grabbed my dress, and I felt it tear—and that's all."

She fell back on the bed, white and trembling, and there followed a long, strained silence. One thought was, of course, in the minds of all of us, including Hyacinth herself—William!

For some weeks after that Hallowe'en night, Hyacinth, as you may well believe, displayed a changed and chastened spirit. She never went anywhere alone even in the daytime, always kept within sight and sound of some other human creature, and at night insisted on Kate's sleeping in the same bed with her. But the most marked change in her was shown in the apathetic indifference she now displayed toward all the young men of Juddville, including the long-legged electrician who had formerly been Kate's. Once more the positions were reversed. Once more it was for Kate that the long-legged electrician haunted a window of the electric-light plant whenever we passed that way on our afternoon walks. It was Kate with whom he ate ice cream and ham-and-lettuce sandwiches in a cozy corner at the First Episcopal Church sociable. It was Kate to whom he wrote long letters which he paid the janitor's son liberally to deliver into her own hands. And finally it was Kate with whom he danced eight dances at our annual reception, held on the evening of the nineteenth of November.

The day after this function, during recreation time—which is between three and six in the afternoon—our door was suddenly flung open, and Hyacinth, with her hair down her back and a pink

kimono flying from her shoulders, bounded in.

"Is Kate here?" she demanded breathlessly, in the tone of one who has got it in for Kate.

Before the question was out of her mouth, she knew the answer, for there on the window seat, comfortably arranged in tailor fashion, sat Kate, placidly nibbling at a large piece of chocolate fudge.

"Present," announced Kate laconically, and took another bite of the fudge.

"Kate, you she-devil, I'm onto you at last!"

"In what way, dear?" asked Kate, with her mouth full.

"I'm onto that perfectly atrocious trick you played on me! I found it in the back of the closet."

Kate's face lighted up with sudden understanding.

"Oh, gee!" she exclaimed ruefully. "I intended to put that darned thing back where it belonged, and then sweetly forgot all about it."

"What darned thing?" I asked, mystified.

"The skeleton," explained Hyacinth indignantly, "the old anatomical skeleton that you and Theo discovered, you remember, and that Doctor Higgs had fixed up and put into the science laboratory. Well, that was the skeleton I saw in the mirror on Hallowe'en night. Kate, that fiend in human shape, had draped an old gray motor veil around its head and put some smudges of gray paint into its eye sockets, to look like graveyard mold, and set it up there to frighten me. And then she must have hauled it down and hid it away in the back of our closet, 'cause, when I went to get out my winter coat, which had been stored with moth balls in there, I bumped right into the thing."

"I deeply regret this lamentable occurrence," said Kate, taking another nibble of fudge, "because I was plan-

ning to tell you all about it myself to-day or to-morrow. And I'd worked up a lovely way of breaking the news, which now, of course, will be all wasted."

"But how could *that* skeleton reach out and grab Hy's dress and tear it?" interposed Theodosia, who always requires full and complete and detailed explanations.

"The skeleton didn't," said Kate, "but there was some one cutely concealed behind the skeleton. You see, while Hy was going up the front stairs, I slipped off and skun up by the back way."

All this time a suspicion had gradually been forming itself in the back of my head. At this confession of Kate's, it suddenly became a conviction.

"Kate," I said, looking straight into those wicked, restless black eyes of hers, "it was *you* who wrote that little verse on the back of the miniature!"

"It was," admitted Kate.

Hyacinth's shell-like complexion went deep pink from humiliated vanity.

"Kate, you cold-blooded wretch!" she cried. "To think of all you've made me go through!"

"There are others," said Kate significantly.

"Why, if I'd had a weak heart, I might have died of that scare," said Hyacinth.

"Hy, my angel, I took no risk. I knew full well that you had quite the reverse of a weak heart," answered Kate, reaching for another piece of

fudge and carefully picking the largest in the dish. "A heart that has room for so many love affairs can't be sickly."

"Of course, I know why you did it—so that I'd be too scared to flirt with the electrician and leave the field open to you."

"Exactly, my love. And a rather neat job I made of it, if I do say it myself. Well for me it was that I had something to put up against that abnormally strong heart of yours—namely, a head."

"Suppose, just to get even, I should start in now and take him away from you again?" suggested Hyacinth wick- edly, the light of conscious power coming into her velvet eyes.

"Too late, dear—we're engaged. And—what's much more important—he left this morning for Spokane, Washington."

"Wait a minute," said Hyacinth, and darted out of the room.

In two minutes she was back, with the miniature in her hand.

"Kate, my old chum, if I had a sword and could break it and hand it to you on bended knee, I would do it. But, failing that, allow me to make you a present. To the victor the spoils! Accept this as a memento of the time when Brains proved to be too much for Beauty."

"Thanks," said Kate. "That's really magnanimous of you, Hy. You know I've always loved it. And let's shake hands, to show there's no hard feelin's."

So they shook hands.



AN ALL-SEASON CORNER

IF a person who deals with the public occasionally lets an unexpected bit of humor have play, he is a public benefactor and sends people on smiling, perhaps all day.

A Boston street-car conductor sometimes sings out, at the meeting of Winter Street and Summer Street:

"Winter! Change for Summer! Spring off the car, but do not fall!"



The Frivolity of Hortense

By Troy Allison

"In her hours of ease—uncertain, coy, and hard to please."

I RAISED myself on my tiptoes and peered over the brick wall that separated our gardens.

"I don't see any earthly reason why you couldn't go if you wanted to, Hortense," I said coaxingly.

Hortense turned the small garden hose on the verbena bed and sprayed it meditatively.

"Where did you get the impression that I was wildly anxious to go?" she asked crushingly.

"It seems to me a girl of any intellect whatever would be just dying to go on the river this morning." My voice held all kinds of persuasive cadences.

"Even a girl of my limited intellect knows it would simply be making herself subject to another proposal," she said cuttingly.

"Hortense, do you know you possess qualities that might be extremely hateful if they were properly cultivated?" I asked. "It's in sorrow I say it, but it's evidently necessary that some man tell you the truth for once."

"So this is your first step in the path of veracity!" She smiled derisively, and changed the spray of the hose deftly.

"If one could only catch you in a serious mood occasionally!" I sighed, mopping my forehead abstractedly.

"You never show a bit of feeling for a fellow. Anyway, I think you might risk going on the river with me this morning. I can't say I feel any symptoms of proposing to-day."

"You've sworn off several times before."

She tossed her small, dark head with the haughty, disdainful, adorable air that no other girl I know has got down to the same degree of studied carelessness. Perhaps Hortense really did get it from her French grandmother, for, now I come to think of it, she is the only girl I know that has a French grandmother.

"You promised you wouldn't propose if I went to the May picnic with you"—her voice was intense with recrimination—"but if you'll look back a little, you'll find that I had to undergo it. Do you know, Terence, you propose oftener, more awkwardly, and more incoherently than any man I ever saw in my life?"

"One would think from your manner that you had much experience to judge from. Now, to my certain knowledge, there are only ten eligible men in this neighborhood, and I don't know that I ever heard of your having traveled extensively." The little flirt often provoked me to rudeness.

"A woman doesn't go around telling

outsiders every time a man asks her to marry him." She threw a vast amount of emphasis on the word "outsiders." "How would you like it if I told everybody you had honored me with at least five hundred opportunities?" Her left shoulder rose in a bewitching shrug.

"Has it really happened so often as that?"

I suppose I looked *woebegone*, for she laughed as if she were enjoying herself more than she ever had in all her eighteen previous years.

"It has really happened quite as often as that," she mimicked. Sometimes I feel as if I almost hated Hortense. "I haven't kept exact tally, but I feel morally certain that the next time will be the five hundred and first—and I'm afraid it might prove fatal." She lifted her small face to the skies mournfully.

"Hortense, you don't mean——" I began hopefully, trying to get a grip on the wall to lift myself over.

"I don't mean anything at all," she said airily. "Do I *ever* mean anything?" Her eyes discouraged any further attempt to get on her side of the wall.

"No, I don't know that you ever really meant anything in your whole life. There certainly has never been a more frivolous girl," I retorted. "It's probably true that I have been foolish five hundred times, but there is nothing like experience for teaching a man wisdom. I assure you that the five hundred and first time will never happen. I now see that it would be a thousand times more sensible to marry a girl that took life a little bit seriously. All this frivolity may be attractive in a sweetheart, but I imagine a man would want a wife he could depend on."

"Suppose you try Mary Dean," she suggested, with a faint giggle.

"She's so terribly homely," I said, without thinking.

"Then, of course, I really ought to consider the five hundred as compli-

mentary," she said musingly. "That gives a different aspect to the case. I had considered them merely disagreeable episodes—but if you were striving, in your incoherent way, to tell me you thought me—er—prettier than Mary Dean, I might have got some satisfaction out of it. A woman generally does like compliments, no matter how cleverly veiled they may be."

"I can't see for the life of me, Hortense, why you choose to be so aggravating." There was misery in my tone, and insulted dignity made me fairly glare at her.

She suddenly sent a stream from the hose directly into my face.

"I declare you frightened me, Teddy," she apologized hastily. "But you looked so very apoplectic, I really thought it necessary. I hope I didn't get you *very* wet." The little hypocrite looked a picture of concern and commiseration.

"You will certainly pay for that, Hortense Lattimer." I wiped my wilted collar with my handkerchief as best I could. "The very next time I get a fair opportunity, I will certainly make you regret having turned a garden hose on as nice a gentleman as ever lived."

"There is nothing on earth as gratifying, I suppose, as having an overwhelming opinion of one's merits." She looked at me reflectively. "I've known Terence Connaughty all my life, but I don't believe I could do his biography justice. Suppose you leave a few notes on the subject, Teddy. I should hate for the world to miss knowing you as you really are."

"Hortense, as sure as you are a living woman, I'll come over and give you that punishment now, if you don't stop guying." I took another grip on the top of the wall.

Hortense looked at me with one eye and measured the distance to the house with the other.

"You never could catch me in this

world," she taunted. "If you can—you may," and she was off like a shot.

I went over the wall with a bound. I really did the leap well, but my foot caught in the confounded ivy, and I fell in a heap in the Lattimers' garden, a violent pain shooting through my left leg.

She had reached the steps when she heard me call her.

"Tell somebody to come and pick up the pieces, my dear," I said. "I am out of the running for a while. My left leg is broken, sure as fate."

She came flying back, faster even than she had gone, her black eyes wide with fright. She gave a little moan when she saw my face. I suppose I did look ghastly; a broken leg is not the most comfortable thing in the world. Evidently Hortense is as foolish about pain as any other girl, for there were large tears in her eyes.

She dropped down on her knees beside me and slipped both arms around the ankle of the broken leg, exactly as she would have put her arms around some child's neck to comfort it.

"You poor, poor thing!" she said, sobbing. "It was every bit my fault!"

And she actually kissed the tip of my russet shoe.

"Hortense Lattimer!" I sat up and held my arms out to her. "I believe you have deceived me five hundred times! This may prove my deathbed." I wriggled off from an uncomfortable stone that I had happened to sit on. "Suppose you tell me the truth now, as man to man: do you care for me one bit?" I was still holding out my arms to her.

Hortense raised her face from my russet shoe.

"Teddy, I adore you!" And she accepted my invitation.

"Run to the house, like a good little girl," I said, a minute later, "and tell one of the men to come and pick up your fallen hero."*

She started, the tears again suffusing her black eyes.

"You needn't cry one bit, sweetheart," I smiled back at her. "I'm perfectly willing to testify in the cause of science that a compound fracture of the tibia and fibula is the most comfortable feeling known, for I swear I feel better than I ever did in my life."



A LUCKY DATE

MANY of us who have to pay interest on borrowed money are not so cheerful about it as Uncle Jackson, a colored gardener.

It was back in the time before the laws against usury were passed. In those days, banks sometimes charged exorbitant interest on small loans.

Uncle Jackson appeared at the cashier's window one morning and asked to borrow ten dollars for a month. As the old man was a good risk, the cashier made out the note and, when it was signed, pushed seven dollars and fifty cents through the window.

"We collect the interest in advance," he said.

The old negro counted the money, scratched his woolly head, and began to chuckle.

"I shore beat you dat time, boss," he said.

"How is that?" asked the cashier.

"Why—if I'd made dat note for four months, 'stead of one, you wouldn't had to pay me nothin'."

The Appetite and the Digestion

By Doctor Lillian Whitney

Dr. Whitney is always glad to answer all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health, but she cannot undertake to answer letters which fail to inclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for reply, or to letters inclosing Canadian stamps. Every week she receives many letters of this sort, in spite of the notice always printed at the end of this department. Sometimes, even, the post office sends notification that letters are being held for her, which careless writers have posted with no stamp. If you have failed to receive a reply to your letter, you may know that it is for one of these three reasons.—EDITORS.

WHY do we eat?" is a question often asked, and the answer unhesitatingly comes back, "To sustain life." But eating has become a highly complicated process among human beings, and is dependent on a good many other factors than the necessity for aliment with which to keep the machinery in motion. To be sure, we will all concede that, fundamentally, life of every kind, in all its various forms, requires food of some sort to maintain existence, but that food may be taken in by an unconscious process, capable of being carried on without a governing intelligence. When, however, we reach the highest form of conscious development—*man*—we find that eating has become one of our most cultivated tastes, and the satirical axiom, "We live to eat," is more true than that "We eat to live."

Among highly civilized and prosperous people, eating depends altogether upon appetite. There are those—notably women of a certain type—who never experience the sensation of hunger, and are therefore never driven to eat through sheer necessity, but in whom, on the contrary, an appetite must be forced in order that the demands of the body for nutriment be satisfied. Again, there are those in whom the appetite is so perverted that

the tremendous importance of proper alimentation means nothing to them. They have no idea of the *value* of foods; the delights of the table have no attractions whatever for them. They would just as soon forego the process of eating, and are as contented with one kind of fare as with another. In those so inclined, the gustatory nerves are poorly developed, and the taste bulbs in the mouth necessarily defective. Their olfactories—the nerves distributed over the nasal chambers, constituting the organ of smell—must also be lacking in sensitiveness.

A defective sense of alimentiveness—that is to say, a poor digestive system—which includes the condition mentioned above, is not alone a tremendous handicap to health, but to beauty; for besides causing a lack of bodily and mental vigor, nervousness, dyspepsia, and sometimes even graver ills, such as consumption both of the lungs and of other organs, it results in physical imperfections of a decided character. Those so afflicted are indicated by a narrow mouth, thin cheeks, thin, pale, and dry lips, a shrunken appearance of the parotid gland, a colorless complexion, a long, high, and thin nose, a long, slim neck, narrow shoulders, a flat chest and abdomen, long, thin, or even transparent, hands, fingers, and ears, and,

in highly developed cases, a feeble, hesitating gait.

Now those endowed with a normal digestive apparatus give evidence of this facially in an attractive mouth of good size, with full red lips, and full cheeks with a good color, extending into fullness of the parotid gland, just in front of the ear opening. Their bodies, too, look well nourished, with firm breasts and well-rounded abdomens.

Of course, where the capacity to enjoy food is overdeveloped, we find gluttony and grossness. Oftentimes intense periodical headaches are caused by an inordinate or uncontrolled appetite.

Mentally, an active digestion is displayed in a healthy desire for and enjoyment of food. The inherited quality of the individual usually determines his tastes. Thus some may be inclined to epicureanism, while others are satisfied with quantity alone. We have all seen the zest and vigor with which a tramp dog attacks a garbage can, in illuminating contrast to the fastidious appetite of a petted and pampered poodle, which haughtily sniffs at delectable titbits fit for a king. It is pretty much the same with the human family.

A defective digestion may be inherited—one may be born with a lack of one or another of the factors that go to make up this remarkable system; it may be developed in childhood through faulty diet; it may be deliberately cultivated by foolish notions; it may result from poverty and consequent lack of proper food; it may follow in the wake



Too many "sweets"!

of a serious illness. The subject should be one of paramount interest to mothers especially, because the healthy and beautiful development of children is fundamentally dependent upon an active digestion and a normal appetite.

No function is more abused than that of the digestion, and where children are concerned, mothers are often greatly to blame. Nature has never yet endowed a child with the faculty of selecting a proper diet, however richly gifted he may be in other respects, and when allowed to select his own foods, he usually chooses those that are altogether unsuited to his capacity for handling them. Thus the appetite for sweets is perfectly normal within certain limits, but in children the taste grows with indulgence, until dainties are the only articles that will satisfy a perverted taste developed under the very eyes of a weak mother. It is easier to give a child jam and white bread than to prepare foods calculated to meet his special needs. In this way ignorant and careless parents destroy the health of their children. Many

stagger through life under the weight of chronic digestive ills deliberately cultivated in childhood.

Furthermore, the inherited tastes and appetites of children are as varied as their looks. This is doubtless a new thought to most mothers. Yet any one who has been forced to "bring an infant up by hand" knows the difficulty of finding a suitable modified milk for



Clean the tongue and preserve the sense of taste.

some of these babies, while others do well on the usual combinations. We will not allow ourselves to stray into this field, however important it is, but the fact must be emphasized that what golden-haired Ruth will thrive upon dark-eyed, sallow-complexioned Henry cannot digest.

Then, too, if a healthy appetite and digestion are established in childhood, there is less trouble as the years of puberty are reached, at which time a girl is apt to experience a distaste for wholesome food and to show a preference for slate pencils and chalk or inordinate supplies of chocolates. Because of the profound changes occur-

ring in her system at this time, great care in the matter of her diet is necessary to prevent anæmia. In later years, intestinal torpor and an enfeebled digestion can often be traced back to the formative age in a girl's life, when she, through ignorance, and her mother, through carelessness, neglected so highly important a detail in her development. Facial blemishes are more

likely to occur in both sexes at this time than at any other, and if the digestion is healthy, it proves a valuable sheet anchor with which to weather successfully complexional outbreaks. Unhappily, a precarious appetite in girls, or the ferocious, wolflike appetite of boys, at this stage, usually exhibits itself in facial eruptions that are difficult to conquer just because the changes going on in the systems of these young people are so profound. Over and above everything, then, a healthy appetite for wholesome food and a good digestion are of superlative importance.

The majority of people understand that the stomach is the chief organ of digestion. *It is*, but there are various elements that enter into the digestive process that *precede* the work of the stomach and tremendously aid this organ in playing its part effectually. When these agents are not present, the stomach is seriously hampered; when their absence is long continued, the stomach becomes decidedly crippled, and after a while we find it chronically incapacitated.

What are these agents? The chief of them is a good appetite; the most delightful viands are profitless if the appetite for consuming them be lacking. Modern physiologists teach that food should not be taken unless craved.

Now many people never become hungry, and it has been found that, by following this advice, the desire for food grows less and less until a mild state of starvation results. No, the body requires daily a certain amount of good, nourishing food, which is transformed into health, strength, and beauty more readily when it is thoroughly enjoyed. The sense of taste, of smell, and of sight are strong factors in this direction; very often the mere sight of food excites a desire for it, especially when it is served on a daintily laid table. On the contrary, soiled linen is sufficient in some cases to check the secretion of gastric juices and to destroy the appetite completely.

The sense of smell is a powerful stimulus in promoting a desire and a relish for food, as we all know. Those who lack an olfactory sense are unaware of the keen delight that savory food engenders. Since digestion really begins in the mouth by the action of the saliva on starchy foods, it will readily be seen how important a genuine relish for food really is. Furthermore, the same agents that provoke a flow of saliva stimulate in the stomach an outpouring of gastric juice, which is, of course, the digestant *par excellence*, for without gastric juice, the reduction of food to a pulpy mass cannot be accomplished, and its propulsion into the small intestine is therefore rendered extremely difficult. All sorts of digestive difficulties naturally follow.

In operating upon human beings for stomach troubles, and also in experimenting on animals, investigators have discovered that the amount both of saliva and of gastric juice is tremendously governed by the appetite, and it is, therefore, of the first importance that we cultivate this valuable adjunct to the digestive process, while at the same time educating the appetite to select the proper foods. Doctor Harvey

W. Wiley recently closed a lecture on this subject with the statement:

"The basis of national preparedness is good, nutritious food. We should all train ourselves to eat proper things."

This is, of course, highly essential, but the *digestion*, or the translation of food into energy and health, is more so. When a person with a splendidly vigorous appetite says he can "digest nails," we may be certain that he has an abundant supply of gastric juice.

Those who are engaged in out-of-door occupations, or who spend much time in the open air, are always ready for their meals and require no artificial stimulation to get up an appetite. A brisk walk in the fresh air before the main meal of the day is, therefore, a good practice. The European idea of serving *hors d'œuvres*, in the form of spicy, pungent, or aromatic little delicacies of one kind or another, is exceedingly helpful in creating a desire for food and preparing the stomach for its digestion by stimulating the flow of gastric juice. Hot beef extract or bouillon has the same effect, and is the real reason why the heavier course at dinner is preceded by a small amount of hot, thin soup.

A jaded appetite is sometimes due to the condition of the mouth. A dry, coated tongue should always be treated with a solution of salt water or vinegar and water, and if the coating be very marked, it should be carefully scraped off with a thin wooden knife or piece of whalebone, as so much depends on the taste buds upon the back of the tongue. When these are heavily coated, naturally no food can reach them, and not only is the pleasure of taste removed, but the saliva is not stimulated to flow. Both salt and vinegar as mouth cleansers have a marked effect on the salivary as well as the gastric glands.

It must not be forgotten that a coated tongue is often nature's way of signifying trouble in some part of the diges-

tive tract. It is an expression of dyspepsia and constipation, and it almost always accompanies inactivity of the liver. "A bad taste in the mouth," with slight nausea and loss of appetite, is sure to mean "biliousness." This combination of symptoms, while not grave in itself, is sure eventually to undermine the health and destroy all claims to charm, vivacity, or sprightliness; for nothing makes one more dull, listless, sluggish, and uninteresting than this condition.

Conjure up the facial expression of one suffering from these mild symptoms—bad taste in the mouth, slight nausea, and loss of appetite. Extremely unpleasant, is it not? At table the influence shed is that of a skeleton at the feast. And so it behooves all such persons to rid themselves of this condition with all possible speed. Physicians like to advise phodo-phillin to stir up the liver, and cascara sagrada for intestinal torpidity. Information concerning a preparation containing these ingredients that is of exceptional value, and not of foreign make, will gladly be given those interested in the subject.

Next in importance to an appetite is the thorough mastication of food. The act of chewing alone excites the digestive secretions, as those who chew gum can testify. Doubtless many have observed that an appetite comes with eating, which is literally true, because both taste and smell are affected by the presence of food in the mouth, and also because it has a direct influence on the salivary glands, causing them to pour out their secretion. Food in the mouth also affects the flow of gastric juice, thus preparing the stomach for its reception.

Dry food is more stimulating than

liquid, and that is the very good reason why we are urged not to moisten our fare with water or other drinks, but to depend upon saliva alone to reduce it to a creamy mass. Food so treated in the mouth makes gastric digestion easy and obviates all danger of stomach troubles. Even after these have become established, it has been found that thorough mastication—chewing—and insalivation—mixing with saliva—is in itself sufficient to overcome most cases of uncomplicated dyspepsia. When food is "bolted" or only slightly masticated, the muscular walls of the stomach are rendered feeble and inert.

This brings us to the important rôle played by the teeth and gums in maintaining and supporting a healthy appetite and digestion.

Decayed teeth and diseased gums infect every morsel of food consumed, and so contaminate all the fluids of the body. Many cases of chronic dyspepsia can be traced to this cause alone, and many obscure ailments—to cite one alone, chronically painful joints simulating rheumatism—have been traced to dental affections.

Other troubles of the mouth, such as disorders of the nose and throat, interfere with the sense of smell and taste, and also, because of the disease germs they engender, contaminate the food and set up digestive troubles. An absolutely healthy mouth, with teeth and glands that functionate normally, is, then, a prerequisite to a good digestion.

When the stomach—either as a result of the habit of "bolting" food or from a lack of gastric secretion due to other causes—acts feebly, a tonic containing the properties of gastric juice—pepsin and the like—is recommended. The formula for a simple tonic of this nature is available to all readers.

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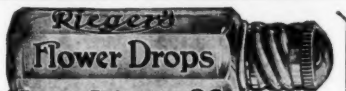
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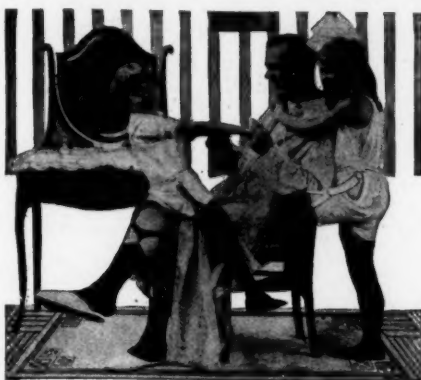
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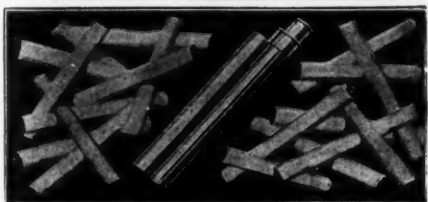


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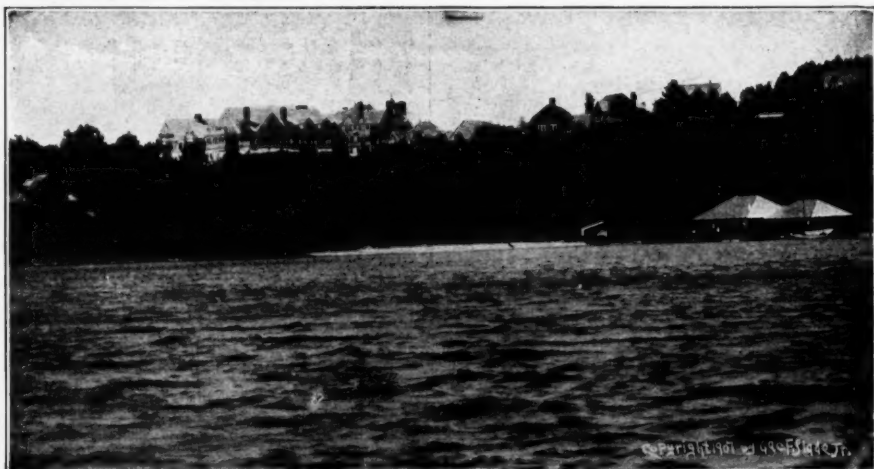
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